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February March

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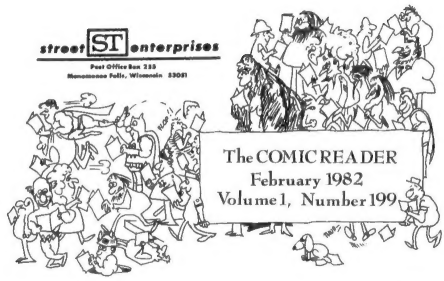

The COMIC READER
February 1982
Volume 1, Number 199

OUR COVERS: Al Milgrom provides us with a front cover which was his original version of this year's THOR ANNUAL; while Michael Mignola gives us his version of DC's late and lamented Manhunter. Front cover © 1982, Marvel Comics Group, back cover © 1982, DC Comics Inc.

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Marvel News

THE MARVEL SUPER-HERO CONTEST OF CHAMPIONS comic book is slated to be released in March, and although its origins as a tabloid Olympics-based story may on the surface appear to have made it a simple matter of splitting it into three issues, such was not the case. This is because Marvel -- being what it is -- has changed enough characters since 1980, when the story was originally supposed to appear, that full-scale modification had to be done. Captain Marvel, for example, is considered to be dead by the time this reaches the stands, and Ms. Marvel, Giant-Man, Nova and White Tiger are in retirement. Ghost Rider and Yellowjacket have changed sides, as it were, while the Red Guardian, Clea, the Silver Surfer and Firelord have left Earth. Since that story was done, Marvel has introduced the Gargoyle, the Blue Shield, the American Eagle, Shooting Star and Firebird, among others. Bob Layton did the revamping of the artwork done by John Romita Jr. and Pablo Marcos.

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Meanwhile, on the special project front, the MARVEL TITAN SCIENCE SERIES has been postponed indefinitely for various reasons (not the least of them being that advance sales were probably not high). The Marvel Graphic Novel has yet to get off the ground since, as of press time, the first issue had yet to be printed. As it now stands, #2 featuring Elric in "The Dreaming City" has been delayed to April.

On the other hand, the Marvel "Limited Series" projects have yet to be scheduled at all, so they can hardly be called "late." Yet.

Marvel has signed a contract with Sunbow Productions, Inc. who produce the educational kid's program THE GREAT SPACE COASTER begun in January, 1981, to become the program's licensing agent. The press release, which is four pages long, never mentions the fact that Marvel is chiefly a comic-book company (or was, at one time), and whether there will be a GREAT SPACE COASTER comic book featuring the characters being licensed for dolls, Halloween costumes, jigsaw puzzles, pool toys, color-by-number sets, t-shirts, sweatshirts, sleepwear, jogging suits, blanket sleepers, school bags, tote bags, belts, slumber bags, pillows, kiddie wrap (to keep those

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kiddies fresh in the refrigerator, no doubt), wrist watches, plastic dinnerware and ukeles and guitars. But don't be surprised if a comic featuring Baxter, Goriddle Gorilla, Edison the Elephant, Knock-Knock the Woodpecker, Gary Gnu and M.T. Promises shows up one of these days.

Speaking of not being surprised, the fact that the two DENNIS THE MENACE digests showed up with the DC slogan in the price code box has been noted in most of the other major news columns. It seems some enterprising World Color worker noticed that the DC logo had been left off these digests -- and of course, only DC has digests, right? So he stuck the DC thingie in there and it wasn't until some 3000 copies were run off that the error was caught. Since the first copies are shipped to comic shops, these all are probably now in the hands of fans who like to collect these little anomalies. (Had this occured in the days prior to the DC-Marvel collaborations, this undoubtedly would have meant a lot more than it does now; in fact, it's probable that among collectors the regular issue with the Spider-Man head in the box will be the rarer one, as it's unlikely the shops'll sell

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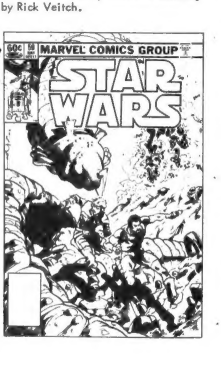
more than a few thousand.)

MARVEL SUPER SPECIAL No. 21 will adapt the CONAN movie and will go on sale in May. However, don't look for Conan's visage to resemble that of movie-Conan Arnold Schwartzenegger. John Buscema, who's doing the art and coloring, will be doing Conan as he's always done him. Michael Fleisher is the scripter.

MARVEL PAPERBACK #7 (a designation of convenience, since they're not numbered anywhere we can find) will feature the Fantastic Four and will have reprints of FANTASTIC FOUR #66,55 and 67. The latter features the birth of Him, who became Warlock. Bob Larkin did the cover painting.

Basil Wolverton fans should seek out EPIC ILLSUTRATED #12, which features an article on the man by Ron Goulart and a reprint of an early '40s SPACEHAWKS story with new coloring by Rick Veitch.



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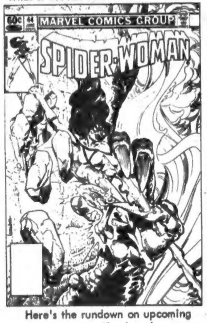
WHAT IF? #34 will be an all-humor issue (intentionally, we're sarcastic enough to add) featuring work by Ron Wilson, Frank Miller, Bill Sienkiewicz, Bob Layton, Larry Hama and Fred Hembeck. #35 features "What If Electra Had Lived?"



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Here's the rundown on upcoming guest appearances: The Angel appears in DAZZLER #17, as do the Fantastic Four in #18; Ram shows up in AVENGERS #222; Brother Voodoo makes a return in MOON KNIGHT #21; Spider-Man guests in DEFENDERS #109; and Margaret shows up in DENNIS THE MENACE #8.

Kerry Gammill has left POWER MAN AND IRON FIST and will be the regular MARVEL TEAM-UP penciller. Speaking of which, #120 will feature Spidey and the Gargoyle, and #121 stars Spidey and the present-day Dominic Fortune. Upcoming co-stars for Spider-Man are Human Torch and Man-Thing.

Over in MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE, Thing co-stars with Jocasta in #89 and Machine Man and Jocasta in #90.

Marie Severin has been named artist for the adaptation of the Jim Henson film, THE DARK CRYSTAL.

Alan Kupperberg pencilled THOR #322.

INSULT TO INJURY DEPT. CRAZY #88 features a relettered version of the death of Phoenix issue of X-MEN (#137) by Chris Claremont, John Byrne and Terry Austin, with new dialogue by Jim Owsley.

Whitman Coming Comics

BEEP BEEP THE ROAD RUNNER No. 100, March. 2/3 new stories. [2/11]

Walt Disney CHIP 'N' DALE No. 77, March. All new stories. [2/11]

Walt Disney HUEY, DEWEY AND LOUIE JUNIOR WOODCHUCKS No. 74, March. All new stories. [2/11]

Walt Disney SUPER GOOF No. 69, March. All new stories. [2/11]

Walt Disney UNCLE SCROOGE No. 195, March. All reprint stories. [2/11]

Walt Disney UNCLE SCROOGE No. 196, April. All reprints stories. [2/11]

Walt Disney UNCLE SCROOGE No. 197, May. All new stories. [2/11]

YOSEMITE SAM No. 77, March. 2/3 new stories. [2/11]

BUCK ROGERS IN THE 25TH CENTURY No. 15, March. All new material. [2/18]

DOCTOR SOLAR, MAN OF THE ATOM No. 31, March. All new stories by Roger McKenzie and Dan Spiegle (Dr. Solar) and McKenzie and Frank Bolle (Magnus). [2/18]

FLASH GORDON No. 37, March. All-new material. [2/18]

LITTLE LULU No. 265, March. 2/3 new material by Arnold Drake, Fred Fredericks and Irv Tripp, and ten pages of John Stanley/Irv Tripp reprints. [2/18]

THE PINK PANTHER No. 82, March. 2/3 new material. [2/18]

POPEYE THE SAILOR No. 167, March. 2/3 new stories by Bill Pearson and George Wildman, and 1/3 reprint material by Bud Sagendorf. [2/18]

TWEETY AND SYLVESTER No. 115, March. 2/3 new stories drawn by John Costanza. [2/18]

Walt Disney COMICS AND STORIES No. 497, March. Thirteen pages are new, nineteen are reprints. [2/18]

Walt Disney COMICS AND STORIES No. 498, April. The same story breakdown as #497. [2/18]

Walt Disney COMICS AND STORIES No. 499, May. Twelve pages of new material, twenty of reprints. [2/18]

BUGS BUNNY No. 235, March. 2/3 new stories. [3/11]

BUGS BUNNY No. 236, April. 2/3 new stories. [3/11]

BUGS BUNNY No. 237, May. 2/3 new stories. [3/11]

Walt Disney CINDERELLA (No. 2), April. The fourth reprinting of FOUR COLOR #272. [3/11]

Walt Disney DAISY AND DONALD No. 54, April. All-new stories. [3/11]

Walt Disney DONALD DUCK No. 238, March. Reprints. [3/11]

Walt Disney DONALD DUCK No. 239, April. Reprints. [3/11]

Walt Disney DONALD DUCK No. 240, May. Reprints. [3/11]

Walt Disney MICKEY MOUSE No. 216, April. Reprints. [3/11]

Walt Disney SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS (No. 3), April. The seventh reprint of FOUR-COLOR #49. [3/11]

Walt Disney WINNIE-THE-POOH No. 28, April. All-new stories. [3/11]

Walt Disney WONDERFUL ADVENTURES OF PINOCCHIO (No. 3), April. The eighth reprinting of FOUR COLOR #92. [3/11]

BEEP BEEP THE ROAD RUNNER No. 101, April. 2/3 new stories. [3/18]

DAFFY DUCK No. 141, April. 2/3 new stories. [3/18]

DAGAR THE INVINCIBLE No. 19, April. A reprint of a Don Glut/Jesse Santos story. [3/18]

LOONEY TUNES No. 43, April. 2/3 new stories. [3/18]

MIGHTY SAMSON No. 32, April. A reprint, possibly of an Otto Binder/Frank Thorne story. [3/18]

THE PINK PANTHER No. 83, April. 2/3 new stories. [3/18]

PORKY PIG No. 105, April. 2/3 new stories. [3/18]

TOM AND JERRY No. 341, April. Reprints. [3/18]

TUROK, SON OF STONE No. 130, April. 2/3 new stories, probably by Paul S. Newman and Jack Sparling. [3/18]

TWEETY AND SYLVESTER No. 116, April. Reprints. [3/18]

WOODY WOODPECKER No. 197, April. 2/3 new stories. [3/18]

YOSEMITE SAM No. 78, April. Reprints. [3/18]

DC News

The project originally known as THE CHALLENGERS, Marv Wolfman and Gene Colan's new occult series, has officially been titled THE DARK FORCE. The sixteen-page preview of the series will appear in THE NEW TEEN TITANS #21, on sale in April. The surrounding illustrations show the character sketches done for the series my Gene Colan, as well as scenary concepts, any of which may end up as promotional ads in the comics. The series is described as being about horror and adventure, and the first story-line is about satan worship and psychic phenomena. The three characters shown above may or may not continue into the story following this one, which are said to be written as if the comic. were a novel; characters will grow and change, and some will stay in the story-line while others leave. The first issue will go on sale in May.

June will see AMETHYST #1 with PANDORA PAN #1 debuting in July. Both will feature sixteen-page previews in one of the more popular titles.

The specifics of the royalty program are these: comics published since July 1981 will collect 5% royalties for copies sold over 100,000. 1% will go to the creator of the concept, the remaining 4% being split between the writer, penciller and inker. 2% goes to the writer, with the remaining 2% split on a 35%/15% basis (the penciller would get 1.4% and the inker .6%) If the penciller only did basic layouts and the inker finished art, the 2% would be split down the middle. If a back-up series is included in the issue, the percentages are determined by the ratio of pages per feature. This sounds like fairly small amounts, but in the case of large-circulation books such as NEW TEEN TITANS, the percentages run into pretty hefty amounts. (The 1% for creators applies only to those characters who began after that July 1981 date.)

Keith Pollard will be the new artist on GREEN LANTERN, joining Mike Barr to make a new team on the book. Joe Staton has left DC.

Last issue, Paul Kupperberg's resignation as Roger Slifer's assistant in the media-relations department was announced. This issue we announce the return of Allan Asherman, who spent some time in the DC bullpen in the early '70s assisting various editors and editing some reprint titles. In between Paul's departure and Allan's arrival, though, there didn't seem to be anyone around to answer our questions or fill in our info gaps, so we have been winging it for awhile, which accounts for this issue's lateness, and the fact that last time we resorted to swiping what we thought were legitimate newsbits from reliable sources. One of these was stolen from Cat Yronwode, who is not only reliable but a good enough friend that she said it'd be all right to do it if we had to. Unfortunately, someone upstairs must've seen us in our perfidy causing us to swipe one of the few things she's reported incorrectly in recent memory. In other words, as the listings in this issue indicate, Marv Wolfman isn't doing SAGA OF THE SWAMP THING, Martin Pasko is, just as we were told all along. That'll teach us.

Another error of my own making occurred when I was attempting to describe the SUPER FRIENDS SPECIAL of last year from memory: I got the title wrong and all of the contents. A number of people corrected my contents listing; it actually contains reprints of SUPER FRIENDS #19 and 36. It was a prize in the recent Post Cereals promotion, won by scratching the stars off a game card enclosed in each box of cereal. As a lottery, the game was illegal in Wisconsin, so even if I'd won, I couldn't have redeemed the prize-winning card.

The last "Whatever Happened To...? story in the series has yet to appear despite what I announced last month. Roy Thomas and Alfredo Alcala will tell us whatever happened to the Black Pirate in an upcoming DC COMICS PRESENTS.

Jan Duursema gets to pencil the lead feature in the August issue of WARLORD, #60. Mike DeCarlo inks.

A Comic Reader

By Sam Kujava

With the temperature outside at 25 degrees below zero, and the wind chill at more than 75 below, this shivering Comic Reader is more than a little grateful for his stack of funnybooks to wile away the indoor hours as Old Man Winter roars through Green Bay, Wisconsin. Jane Pauley just informed me that this is the COLDEST weather the snow-socked Midwest has experienced in THIS CENTURY, and I'm wondering ...have Captain Cold, Weather Wizard and Killer Frost joined forces?

I'm grateful for the opportunity to wade into a batch of new comic books, but as usual, it takes a bit of searching to find the few gems. Depending on your point of view, it is STRANGE/FITTING/IRONIC that my best reading delights were, out of 30+ books, a re-

print, a lettercol and a text page!

The reprint is in the latest issue of MARVEL TALES; AMAZING FANTASY #15, including the original unpublished cover by Steve Ditko, on view for the children of the '80s. The twenty-year-old Lee and Ditko material is charmingly rough and appealingly simple, and, you guessed it, far above 90% of anything that Shooter-Marvel has produced in the last few years. Hold this up to the latest DAZZLER or DEFENDERS... can anyone honestly defend that waste of wood pulp? Keep the reprints coming--I know for a fact that a lot of new and old fans have added MARVEL TALES to their buying lists...the old fans to remember, the new fans to learn, and hopefully, grow more discerning.

DETECTIVE COMICS #512, labeled the 45th Anniversary Special, was worthwhile only because of the wonderful three-page letters column. Editor Dick Giordano solicited anecdotal missives from DC pioneers Jerry Siegel, Joe Shuster, Creig Flessel and Sheldon Mayer. The reading, and memories, are special indeed. Too bad the comic stories weren't nearly as good. The Batman and Robin wrap-up of a continued cliffhanger was unremarkable. The Batgirl back-up was just plain awful, featuring yet another one-dimensional throwaway group of crazed motorcyclists. Remember the ridiculous bikers from the Clint Eastwood movie EVERY WHICH WAY BUT LOOSE? Improbable, yes? The laughable clowns in this strip that harass Barbara Gordon/Batgirl are totally un-fearsome, as written by Cary Burkett and rendered by Jose Delbo and Joe Giella, and even more ludicrous than any filmic parodies. Though Giordano has much more experience at editing than A Comic Reader, in his place I would have blue-pencilled those cardboard characters for corrections, and sent the art back to Delbo along with a few copies of EASY RIDER and IRON HORSE. Or was it associate editor Dave Manak that okayed this silliness during his afternoon siesta?

The next-to-last issue of THE UNEXPECTED, #220, featured a marvelous text page in place of letters, outlining the long and fruitful career of DC editor Jack Schiff. Most of the titles Jack dreamed up or worked on are gone; others, like HOUSE OF MYSTERY, are drastically altered (and, need I add, not for the better). But this testimony to Schiff's many contributions (by DC staffer Robin Snyder) is a welcome reminder, as are the Spidey reprint and the DETECTIVE lettercol, to the excitement and variety that comics once offered in generous helpings.

Somebody recently asked me if I was going to write about the direct sales comics as well as the newsstand releases. Shame on that person...he is the owner of the nearest comic shop, some 70+ miles south of these cold climes! Scott, you know I'm lucky if I can make the three-hour round trip more than four or five times a year! My last excursion yielded the following "bounty."

MARVEL FANFARE will be an interesting book, if #1 is any indication. Fine reproduction, paper stock and color quality in a $1.25 package. Mike Golden's art is frustrating to behold, though, in this artist's eyes. (Yes, dear hearts, A COMIC READER is also A WORKING ARTIST.) Most cartoonists tend toward great stock shots like close-ups and action poses...their backgrounds leave a lot to be desired, if drawn at all. Golden is the antithesis of this average joe. His backgrounds and long shots are magnificent to behold; he's got a feeling for characters in repose, and composes his pages with a good cinematic sense. But his manner of rendering facial features is fouled up, as is the unreal musculature that his action figures are saddled with. Golden is obviously talented, so why hasn't anyone told him that he's screwing up on the basics? If you've got a copy of FANFARE on hand, page through it and see what I'm lamenting about. Check the Parker close-ups on pages 10 and 11. The weakness of the drawing, especially on the latter, weakens the dramatic impact of the story. And Spidey's muscles, as on the title page, are like nothing I've EVER seen in ANY anatomy book. It's hard for me as a reader to "buy" these characters with these distortions. It interferes with my otherwise total enjoyment of a fine outdoor adventure. Lord, the editor of this book is an artist, as well! Can't Milgrom take Golden aside and tell him to bone up on Bridgeman and Hogarth? If anybody was editing these books (I know you've heard it before; you're going to keep on hearing it) I wouldn't feel the compulsion to point my accusing digit at such UNNECESSARY flubs.

The back-up story in FANFARE stars DAREDEVIL, as handled by Roger McKenzie and Paul Smith. The Christmas tale was just like every BATMAN Christmas story you've seen, the lead characters were so interchangeable. If that's what the creative minds set out to accomplish, they've succeeded. Not much of a treat for the reader, though.

Other direct sales titles from Marvel that I picked up included the latest issues of MICRONAUTS, KAZAR and MOON KNIGHT. Contrary to the Marvel P.R. mill, these aren't special gifts offered to the discerning fan market. Excuse me for being blunt, but this crap was yanked off the newsstand none too soon, and its appearance in the specialty shops is a kind of mercy killing. At least the majority of you don't have to see these terminal cases in their death throes! Except for the notable exception of Gil Kane on the MICRONAUTS, I cannot recommend anything about these titles, unless you want to see Marvel at its worst. The "creative" input is substandard, the writing and editorial style more pretentious than ever, the art running the gamut from crude to illustrative, minus any rudiments of storytelling. If that sounds like cruel blanket condemnation, I'm sorry. This is the direction that Marvel wants to go into, the direct-sales-only market. As examples of this trend, MOON KNIGHT and Co. suck the mop. They pander to an elite in-group of rabid, buy-anything fanatics because it is EASIER than writing/drawing to a general audience and seeking to increase that vast potential sales block. Or, sadder still, they lack the ability to produce such material.

I almost ended my column with the last paragraph, but I don't want you to think those cold North Winds outside have seeped into my critic's heart. As always, A COMIC READER would rather concentrate on the positive, would-be optimist that I am. There is still a good yarn, a well-told story, a boldly-drawn tale to be had in some of the newsstand books that are worth the trip and the search. Though no fan of either Marv Wolfman or Joe Staton, I quite enjoyed GREEN LANTERN #150, especially the lead story. Mike DeCarlo's inks are a factor toward my enjoyment, I'm sure. Look at Staton's inks on the back-up story. Crude, crude stuff that looks as if it was done over the weekend. The last panel of page 7 is a real howler! Don't knock yourself out, Joe.

In FLASH #307, Cary Bates continues to be inspired by artist Carmine Infantino, which adds up to punchy plots and prose. Sad to say, Carmine's stylistic slapdashery is getting a little long in the tooth, if we compare the art to his last stint on this venerable title. Maybe capable Bob Smith is inking C.I. too literally; I'm not sure. But I think that if the pencilling was any "looser" it would fall apart in a light breeze. Tighter, please, Mr. Artist? [See the latest issue, Sam, inked by Dennis Jensen--tighter, and better, you couldn't get! MT] The back-up strip is a dreadful piece of garbage going under the title of DR. FATE. Don't be fooled, though. I've seen the real article from the '40s and the '60s and this AIN'T it. Keith Giffen's art is usually bland and static, but this month he does make everybody's Tasteless Award for the Alien-

[Continued on page 35]

Information Center

By Don Rosa

As much as I'd like to have an I. C. in each issue of THE COMIC READER, my mail seems to appear in spurts after the appearances of the column. This results in my being all questioned-out for one issue and laden with queries for the next...therefore, at least for now, I.C. seems to want to appear every other issue. I did, however, skip TWO issues this time, a result of moving habitat locales...and any collector worth his anal-retention knows what a, how you say, "hassle" that is!

Before moving, I decided to BOX and BAG all of my comics and magazines, and finally remove them from the open stacks on open metal shelving. All those stacks did look impressive, but it did get bothersome, at times, trying to reach the bottom comic in the stack of FOUR COLOR or "miscellaneous Charltons" or such. Bagging the little suckers eliminates that by displaying them on edge in boxes, no one comic any more difficult to reach than another. However, it's now maddening to research a question such as one that appears in this issue: "List the features in DC's western comics of the 1950s. Those ten li'l words call for me to unbag and rebag HUNDREDS of issues...but then, I knew the job was dangerous when I took it. I still enjoy doing this sort of article since it forces me to come into closer contact with every corner of my funny-book library when, otherwise, certain completed collections may go untouched for many years.

In case you're wondering, I did NOT bag my comics in order to PRESERVE them. As long as I was the only one handling them, and I was keeping watch on the light and humidity in their room, those comics were weathering the decades quite well, thank you. I personally think this deacidifying cardboard and mylar snugs business is a little bit of hooey. Granted, in a mylar snug a comic will last for 5000 years! MY way, the poor thing will only last a few measly CENTURIES. You explain the difference to me. But I'm no soothsayer or scientist...those comic-preservationists may have the last laugh on me in the years to come. I'll get back to you on it in 75 years.

OLD BUSINESS: A few issues back, someone (was it me?) was pondering the existence of TERRIFIC COMICS beyond #14 (my last issue of this mid-'50s sleazo title). Mr. Tiefenbacher himself informed me that he had just turned up an issue #16 which bore a cover logo of "Terrific Comics Presents WONDER BOY," "Wonder Boy" being the dominant title. This also indicates that TERRIFIC #17 and 18 are probably these WONDER BOYs #17 and 18, which I DO have, and which are listed in (dramatic pause)... "The GUIDE" as TERRIFIC #17 and 18 (as well as WONDER BOY #17 and 18).

I'd been asked about the situation on Fred Rhoads, the chap who drew Harvey's SAD SACK comics for 24 years. Karl Wilcox wrote in and related to me Rhoads' plight, which, to make a long story short, went like this: in 1977, Harvey Publications laid Rhoads off, after he drew about 100,000 panels of the Sack for them during his two anna' half decades. When Rhoads filed for unemployment and social security benefits, he was informed that for all those years Harvey had considered him a FREELANCER and NOT an employee, therefore, NO benefits! Rhoads took Harvey to court claiming that he had been deprived of just compensation and had been misled for 2 1/2 decades as to his job status, otherwise he would never have released the copyrights to his work without royalties. Some of Rhoads' SAD SACK stories were used as many as five times without additional compensation. However, Harvey had no trouble showing that Rhoads received Internal Revenue Service forms each year describing his work as that of a free-lancer. Rhoads found that he could not even collect unemployment insurance since Harvey had not paid the taxes. I may not know all the truths and specifics of this case, but it sounds to me as though Mr. Rhoads should have been less sure of his position and more careful with his tax returns. In any case, this is surely one of the seventeen reasons why H. & R. Block should handle our taxes. It's a cruel world.

From Cat Yronwode, the woman with the lower-case name and the upper-case expertise, come some additions/corrections on my list of the credits of letterer Ben Oda. Oda did NOT letter for Will Eisner until mid or late 1950 (I'd said late '40s). Abe Kanegson did the Eisner/SPIRIT/American Visuals lettering from mid-1946 to mid-1950, and Oda took over after an unknown "fill-in" letterer did a few SPIRIT sections in the summer of 1950. Oda also did Eisner's P.S. Magazine, at least during 1951-1953. Plus, Mr. Oda lettered THE PICTURE BIBLE comics for David C. Cook Publishing for sixteen years -- approximately mid-'50s to 1978. (Andre LeBlanc drew this 500+ page series.)

Bill Spicer of FANFARE Magazine wrote in to say that MILT Kamen did

not draw those pages from ELLERY QUEEN and BRUCE GENTRY comics that we were trying to identify some time back, because he's a stand-up comedian...perhaps JACK Kamen had something to do with it. (Is my face red! But Bill is the only reader to spot my idiot typo. Perhaps he's my only reader, period.) Bill suggests that the "pin-up" style poses may have been pencilled by Milt...er, JACK...but the page in general is probably a SHOP effort, with numerous artists of possibly the Iger Art Shop contributing work. Bill also sends me a copy of the superb FANFARE #4 and grants me permission to reprint a letter contained therein which answers another old I.C. question of where "Ghastly" Graham Ingels is keeping himself nowadays. Ingels is working in the graphic art field in Florida and sent this letter to Bill Gaines in 1978, apparently concerning Bill's desire to interview Ingels:

"Dear Bill,

"I really appreciate your consideration. I'm not a total recluse but avoid public contact as much as possible, particularly relating to the past.

"My work these days requires a certain amount of publicity and promotion beneficial mainly to other interests. Obviously, I have many good reasons to constantly discourage the image-making attempts of well-intentioned followers.

"I am here during the winter months only, so their projected visit would be pointless. Even so, I would regard the intrusion with great hostility, and believe me, it would avail them nothing. This guy Spicer comes on strong in a crude fashion and he does NOT have my address. My attorney handles all.

"I will be most grateful if you block any further inquiry and appreciate so much your concern and the trouble you've taken.

"Best wishes and happiness, thanks,
Graham

"Regards to the old gang! I have many gratifying thoughts of our relationship, Bill, and your graciousness at Christmas time."

I'm not sure what conclusions we might derive from this note, but apparently, even though Ingels has fond memories of his days at EC, he feels that fandom's exposure of his career as a comic-book artist would interfere with his current career in graphic arts. Whatever the reason, it's unfortunate. But it IS HIS LIFE, so...

[Lastly in the Old Business Dept., Don has asked that I reveal that I have aided in answering some past queries and will continue to do so, hereafter indicated by my initials after an answer. As such, I have some additions/corrections of my own to make. In the answer to the lettering question of #196, I listed DC letterers and excluded Milt Snappin, besides listing Stan Starkman under his pen name of Stan Quill. In answering a question about the MEDAL OF HONOR series, I missed one which appeared in TOMAHAWK #138. And when listing the Day After Doomsday appearances in WEIRD WAR TALES, I listed the Barry of Bleeker Street character as appearing in far more issues than he did; he was only in #42-44. Not to mention the fact that I'd forgotten that it originally began as a feature in HOUSE OF SECRETS #86,95, and 97. I suppose I should have caught these first-time-around, as I caught them all myself on rereading the issues. My apologies. MT]

THE COMIC BOOK HALL OF FAME

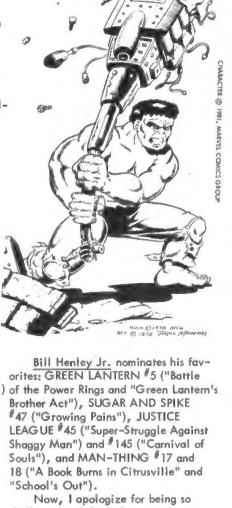
An old pal, Russ Maheras, is first up this issue to nominate his favorite single comic-book issues, and just 'cause he's a buddy, we'll let him over-extend the three-nomination-limit I try to impose simply to save space. (If any readers feel, as does Russ, that three is far too short a list of all-time-great-comics to try to compose, they can easily TRICK me by sending in three nominations PER ISSUE.) Russ's favorites: FANTASTIC FOUR #5, 18, 39 and ANNUAL #1; MARVEL TALES (reprints) #2 and 4 (even though reprints, I can see how an assemblage of such classics would make quite an issue!); SGT. FURY #2 and 13; and SPIDER-MAN #4 and 16. Russ also felt compelled to name his choice for the single WORST comic of all time: NEUTRO #1 (one-shot, Dell 1966). I hesitatingly invite other nominations for the single WORST funny-book...?

Jamie Russell admits he's only been a comic fan for two years (we were ALL "a comic-fan-for-only-two years" at some point, Jamie), but he'd still like to say that in that time he's found HOWARD THE DUCK Magazine #6, DAREDEVIL #179 and X-MEN #141 to be outstanding.

Fellow Kentuckian Rod Smith has the single nomination of T.H.U.N.D.E.R. AGENTS #2 ("Dynamo vs. Dynavac").

Ric Fenner couldn't hold it to fewer than four: DETECTIVE #457 ("There is No Hope in Crime Alley"); SUPERMAN #172 ("The New Superman"); MOON KNIGHT #14 ("Stained Glass Scarlet," a good anti-gun story); and DAREDEVIL #177 ("Where Angels Fear to Tread").

Don Secrease puts in his 2¢ with HAWKMAN #1 ("Master of the Sky Weapons"), MYSTERY IN SPACE #75 ("The Planet That Came to a Standstill"), and the origin of the Metal Men in SHOWCASE #37.



Bill Henley Jr. nominates his favorites: GREEN LANTERN #5 ("Battle of the Power Rings and "Green Lantern's Brother Act"), SUGAR AND SPIKE #47 ("Growing Pains"), JUSTICE LEAGUE #45 ("Super-Struggle Against Shaggy Man") and #145 ("Carnival of Souls"), and MAN-THING #17 and 18 ("A Book Burns in Citrusville" and "School's Out").

Now, I apologize for being so shallow, but I think these next two fellas are pulling our collective leg... nonetheless, Harvey Schein nominates SUPER-HEROES BATTLE SUPER-GORILLAS #1, OUR LOVE STORY #4 and BOZO THE CLOWN #9...while Mike Worrell names BATMAN #251, GASP! #3 and ATOMIC #2 (1946). (?)

JOHN A. WILCOX -- Westport, Connecticut. WHAT WAS THE FIRST DIGEST-SIZE COMIC PUBLISHED???

An interesting question! One of the type when I'm never quite sure if I can call to mind all the possibilities. But what I assume we're looking for here is a collection of ALL comic-strip work, in a fairly thick volume of stubby dimensions with fairly heavy cover stock, right? If we don't specify an "all comic-strip" format, we'd run up against the penny dreadfuls and dime novels of the 19th century (and Ghod-noze what other ancient illustrated works), plus we'd be confronted with BIG LITTLE BOOKS as well! But while these had comic-strip-type illustrations, they were rearranged to appear as text illustrations, and NOT a graphic narrative. What's our next obstacle? Comic PAMPHLETS like Fawcett miniatures, Cheerios giveaways, various 5 1/4" x 7 1/4" 5¢ comics like DAISY COMICS (Eastern Color, 1936) and CAPTAIN ATOM (Nationwide Publishers, 1950), and once again, Ghod-noze what else. [Harvey published SPITFIRE #1 and 2, But these are tiny comic book pamphlets, NOT digests. All I can do is glance through my own collection and/or memory and try to come up with something. How about Whitman's ALL-PICTURE COMICS - BETTER LITTLE BOOKS" of the late '30s, early '40s? These were "BIG (BETTER) LITTLE BOOKS," only WITHOUT the alternating text pages. Whitman published such items along with their regular B.L.B.s on through the late '40s. Next I see the DAISY HANDBOOKS #1 (1946, with Buck Rogers and Red Ryder), #2 (1948, with Captain Marvel, Ibis, Red Ryder, Boy Commandos and Roboman), and the similar DAISY RED RYDER GUN BOOK (1955, with Red and the Boy Commandos). Sure, there was text, but the strips were printed in comic-book format. Next I come across WHITMAN COMICS, a 1962 series of small-size, stiff-cover reprints from comic books as published by Dell (noteworthy is a DONALD DUCK volume of BARKS reprints). But what the poor questioner probably had in mind before I thoroughly confused him were the MODERN digests, the first such example of which was the WALT DISNEY COMICS DIGEST #1 (June, 1968) from Gold Key, which they soon followed up with the GOLDEN COMICS DIGEST (May, 1969), the MYSTERY COMICS DIGEST, etc.

Other companies joined in with the likes of DENNIS THE MENACE POCKETFUL OF FUN (Spring, '69), DC's one-shot TARZAN COMICS DIGEST (1972), the ARCHIE COMICS DIGEST (1973), Harvey's RICHIE RICH

DIGEST (1977), and so on, each company expanding on these first endeavors with other titles. Just promise me you don't want to hear about "PAPERBACK BOOK" comic-strip collections, which will require consulting a paperback expert!

[Harvey published SPITFIRE #1 and 2, SPEED COMICS #14-16 and POCKET COMICS #1-4 in the early '40s, all of which would be pamphlets rather than digests. However, Elliott Publishing collected coverless copies of these titles and rebound them in 200-page magazines called DOUBLE-UP COMICS. These might be considered the first digests, though their origin and status as rebound comics undermines their legitimacy as "publications." mt]

And then there were those "comic booklets -- the kind men like"...

WHAT WAS DON HECK'S FIRST PRO ART JOB FOR MARVEL???

It's hard to nail down a specific issue for a fellow who's been around so long...let's just take a quick look at this heck of a career.

Heck worked for Comic Media Publishing in 1953-55, particularly doing COVERS (not bad for a first job), he did the Heinz/Toby CAPTAIN GALLANT one-shot in 1955, plus work for Farrell (1954), Charlton (1955, work done for Toby and published by Charlton when the latter bought out the former), St. John (1950-?), ME (1950-?), MARVEL (1955-1978) on CLIFF MASON, JANN OF THE JUNGLE, TORPEDO TAYLOR, etc.; and at Dell (FROGMEN #8) and Gold Key (MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E. #1 and 5, VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA #3 and RIPLEY'S BELIEVE IT OR NOT!) in 1964-65. Heck was most active as one of the four chief Marvel artists (with Kirby, Ditko and Ayers) from 1959-1967.

WHO WAS THE MAIN COLORIST FOR THE EARLY (AND UNCREDITED) MARVEL COMICS LINE???

It seems to me that Stan Goldberg's name has been mentioned. Anyone know?

WHAT WAS THE FIRST COMICS SPECIALTY SHOP (OR "DEALER")???

I'm not sure what you mean. We might be able to track down the first physical storefront comics-for-collectors shop...but the identity of the first "dealer" is impossible, lost to antiquity by the gradual development of the need and the haziness of a definition of the term.

BILL HENLEY, JR. -- Greenwich, Ohio. COULD YOU DO AN INDEX OF THE FEATURES IN THE OLD DC WESTERN TITLES "WESTERN COMICS," "ALL-AMERICAN WESTERN," and "ALL-STAR WESTERN"? WHEN DID NIGHTHAWK START IN "WESTERN COMICS"? (OVERSTREET SAYS #5, BUT I HAVE #6 AND NO NIGHTHAWK). AND WHAT IS NIGHTHAWK'S ORIGIN, IF ANY???

These old DCs are quite worthy of attention, especially since we have many of the same writers and artists (Kane, Anderson, Infantino, Kubert) who make other DCs of the same period so collectible. Nighthawk had no origin that I spotted, and he DID fail to make an appearance in that #6, even though he did begin in #5 of WESTERN. Here's an index to the features in these three titles:

WESTERN COMICS #1-85
The Vigilante (from ACTION): #1-4
The Wyoming Kid: #1-85 (entire run)
The Cowboy Marshal: #1-30,32-42
Rodeo Rick: #1-27, 31-37,39-67,69
The Nighthawk: #5,7-75 (plus cover-featured on #36, the only non-Wyoming Kid cover from #1-42)
Pow-Wow Smith (from DETECTIVE): #43-85
Matt Savage, Trail Boss: #43-85 [ostensibly the father of Scalphunter, though these stories take place in the post-Civil War period, AFTER his supposed death]

ALL-AMERICAN WESTERN #103-126
Johnny Thunder #103-126 (began in ALL-AMERICAN COMICS #100-102)
Foley of the Fighting 5th: #103-126
Harmony Hayes, the Minstrel Maverick: #103-126
Tony Barrett and her Overland Coach: #103-126
Epics of the Texas Rangers (3-page fillers): #109-126
(A little side-note: Issue #125 was numbered #12" on the cover...I guess somebody sneezed the "5" off of the paste-up.)

ALL-STAR WESTERN #58-119
The Trigger Twins: #58-119
Don Caballero: #58-65
The Roving Rangers: #58-66
Strong Bow: #58-99
Johnny Thunder: #67-119
Foley of the Fighting 5th: #66-115
Super-Chief (an Indian given actual super-powers by a meteor, who fights alien beings, etc.): #117-119
Madame .44 appears with Johnny Thunder in #117-119 (the three JT stories written by Gardner Fox); the (dramatic pause) "Guide" lists her simply as "Madame," suggesting that the comic features stories about a frontier cat-house.

I HAVE "REX THE WONDER DOG" #4 WITH WHAT APPEARS TO BE THE ORIGIN AND FIRST APPEARANCE OF DETECTIVE CHIMP (CARMINE INFANTINO'S ALL-TIME FAVORITE STRIP); WHAT WAS THE SECONDARY FEATURE IN THE FIRST THREE ISSUES OF "REX"???

This title (judging by the recent price increases) is finally getting some of the attention it deserves. But for the "ignernt," let it be known that this seemingly silly comic (aren't they all?) featured art by Toth, Kane, Infantino, DC's very best "wash" covers outside of SEA DEVILS, and plenty of all-out science-fiction...all involving a white police dog and a chimpanzee. Anyhow, REX #1-3 had back-up features concerning HUMANS as the central characters FIGHTING NASTY ANIMALS (bears, coyotes, etc.)...a different character each issue. This feature was obviously out-of-step with the spirit of the magazine (ANIMALS fighting nasty HUMANS)...so the chimp was added with your #4.

I RECALL DC HAD TO PAY MUHAMMAD ALI A LOT OF MONEY TO APPEAR IN ONE OF THEIR COMICS ("SUPERMAN VS. MUHAMMAD ALI" TREASURY EDITION)... HOW MUCH DID YOU HAVE TO PAY TO USE HIM IN YOUR "CAPTAIN KENTUCKY" ???

When I decided to do Captain Kentucky vs. Muhammad Ali, I had that very thing in mind, and consulted the editors of the LOUISVILLE TIMES newspaper (where C.K., of course, appears long before it reaches TCR). They decided that Ali is a PUBLIC FEATURE and I could use him in the strip as I might use an individual in an editorial cartoon or such. Whether this is correct or not, I left it be the editors' decision so that any consequences would fall into THEIR laps. But since C.K. is the ONLY part of this ENTIRE vast morning-evening-edition newspaper-empire which is copyrighted to its author/artist (me), I also crossed my fingers. No lawsuits yet.

HAS ANYONE EVER TRACKED DOWN WHO WROTE THE "MAGNUS, ROBOT FIGHTER" COMICS ???

Chase Craig, Western Publishing editor from 1950-1977, created the strip, Don Christensen is known to have written some, as is Eric Freiwald, and as is Kermit "Bloopers" Shaefer. Richard Kyle, who used to publish GRAPHIC STORY MAGAZINE, wrote some of the last new stories. Maybe Mark Evanier

can tell us more exact credits than these? mt

H. LEE -- Duivendrecht, The Netherlands. WHICH ISSUES OF "WONDER WOMAN" ARE PENCILLED BY DICK GIORDANO???

As you perhaps are aware, Giordano INKED quite a few (if not all) of the uncredited WONDER WOMAN issues from #178 (October '68) on through Mike Sekowsky's tenure as penciller/writer. But Giordano pencilled only issues #200 (May-June '72) - 203.

DOUG ADAMS -- Louisville, Kentucky. WHICH ISSUES OF "WONDER WOMAN" DID SAMUEL DELANEY WRITE???

Prominent science-fiction author Sam Delaney scripted W.W. #202 and 203 (late 1972), according to the credit lines.

HOWARD TAUTBOLT -- North St. Paul, Minnesota. WHY DID MARVEL COMICS DISCONTINUE "THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN" IN 1968 AFTER ONLY TWO ISSUES ???

Perhaps it wasn't selling, y'think?

WILL JOHN ROMITA EVER RETURN TO DRAW "SPIDER-MAN" ???

I read all of Jean Dixon's predictions for 1982 in the NATIONAL ENQUIRER, and, alas, this was NOT one of them.

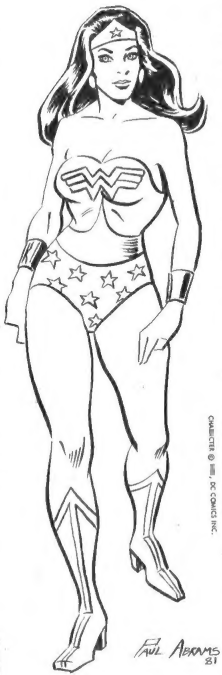
Mock sarcasm aside, these are obviously questions involving inter-industry knowledge of which I am NOT a source.

JAMES RUSSELL -- Wellesley, Massachusetts. I HAVE A FRIEND WHO THINKS ALL COMICS ARE WORTHLESS TRASH. IF YOU HAD TO PICK ONE COMIC TO PROVE HIM WRONG, WHICH ONE WOULD IT BE???

A possible solution to this would be for you to check out my "Comic Book Hall of Fame" each issue and see what you can come up with.

But my actual ANSWER to you is, first: if you're dealing with someone who has never read or enjoyed comics, then you'd be wasting your time trying to "prove" anything to him! Comic art appreciation is certainly an ACQUIRED TASTE, and pity the poor soul who has never acquired it. If he doesn't already have the proper spirit or sense-of-wonder to understand comic books, then they will be forever over (or as far as HE is concerned, UNDER) his head. One man's meat, and all that.

Secondly, and more importantly:



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why the hell should you OR I feel it necessary to prove ANYTHING to ANYBODY about our personal likes or dislikes?!?! If your "friend" is so narrow-minded as to go through life without trying to expand his horizons, that's HIS problem, not YOURS. Let HIM worry about it.

DART VERNON -- Los Angeles, California. COULD YOU LIST ALL THE WEIRD CREATURES THAT JIMMY OLSEN (THAT SNAPPY DRESSER) TURNED INTO???

Ah, perhaps this questioner is someone like myself, who, while recognizing the inherent silliness of many Superman-family plots of the '50s and '60s, recognizes ALSO that they were entertaining comics, nonetheless! I VASTLY prefer a simple old Jimmy Olsen or Lois Lane goodie to any two dozen issues of how the Fantastic Four save the universe in its entirety for the umpteenth time. The cosmic phoniness of that sort of thing wears thin. Jimmy Olsen stories were SILLY, but built on a framework of simple, everyday situations and people. Perhaps I find them intriguing since they involve fantastic situations blooming from a relatively normal world, in contrast to COSMIC CONFLICTS piling upon one another, issue after issue! But there I go trying to "prove" the value of MY preferences...and as I told the preceding questioner, I should not need to.

Jimmy Olsen often acquired special powers or characteristics... anti-gravity, super-strength, super-weight, invisibility, super-hunger, etc. But we are looking for instances when his actual physical shape is altered, are we not? Spot-checking J.O. #1-21, I don't spot any altered-states (I don't expect such shenanigans in these early issues) but with issue #22 (April 1957), Jimmy acquires a huge "super-brain" with cranium to match. From there we go to #23 (super-fast-growing beard), #24 (switches minds with a gorilla), #27 (becomes a "Kryptonite Kid" similar to the latter-day Superboy foe), #28 (human skyscraper), #31 (ELASTIC LAD, also to turn up in #37,46,54,62,64,70, 72 and 76), #32 (Jovian form, Pinocchio nose), #41 (human octopus), #42 (genie), #44 (wolfman, again in #52,70 and 72), #47 (an ADULT, indicating Jimmy is supposedly a young teen in these stories), #49 ("Congorilla" himself...again in #86), #49 (super-fat), #53 (giant turtle-man), #54 (a baby), #59 (a "?"), #65 (human porcupine), #66 (old man, again in #85), #77 (giant), #80 (Bizarro), #83 (alien), #85 (Chameleon Boy-powers), #87 (Brainiac mind), #94 (Lana Lang's stupid Insect Queen powers). It should be mentioned that in issues #44, 67 and 84 Jimmy masqueraded as a GIRL, though it was only a disguise, not a physical transformation (unlike that old Superboy story where it IS an actual PHYSICAL transformation!).

WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THE "MODESTY BLAISE" COMIC STRIP? TCR #196 SUGGESTED THAT IT'S BEEN CANNED, WHICH WOULD BE AWFUL!

I can find nothing that would suggest this in that particular issue, although it was not among the strips mentioned in the letter from a British reader as being currently published, although that's not quite the same thing as saying it's dead. If it has, will someone tell us? mt

HOW ABOUT A LIST OF SUPER-HERO FAMILIES (WHERE THE FOLKS AND SIBLINGS HAVE POWERS TOO)???

You mean like Mommy and Daddy and Junior and Sis? All super-powered? I'm drawing a blank on this! Uh... Supergirl and her parents are the first to leap to mind. Anybody take it from there?
(Perhaps Reed, Sue and Franklin Richards, or Arthur, Mera and son Curry, or Quicksilver, Crystal and child -- or the many Legionnaires who come from planets where their whole race has the same powers? mt)

MARK WORDEN -- Ann Arbor, Michigan. CAN YOU DO UP A LIST OF ALL THE DC "IMAGINARY STORIES" -- NOT ONLY THE ONES EXPLICITLY MARKED AS SUCH, BUT ALSO THE STORIES THAT HANDLED THE SAME IDEA BY DIFFERENT STORY DEVICES? I RECALL A STORY WHERE SUPERMAN DONS SOME SORT OF HELMET AND SEES WHAT HIS LIFE WOULD HAVE BEEN LIKE ON KRYPTON HAD THE PLANET NOT EXPLODED.

This is a tall order! So often an entire story turns out to be a dream sequence -- let's ignore these. That story you describe was in SUPERMAN #132 ("If Krypton Had Lived On") and it IS in the spirit of an "Imaginary Tale" which the Superman-family comics were famous for. I'd have to unbag and read through hundreds and hundreds of comics to fully answer this. Instead, I'll rely on my memory and the assumption that, as these were popular events, they were cover-featured. I'll also probably miss some of the more recent examples, in favor of the early "imaginary" stories when the idea was still FRESH and they hadn't sunk to such nonesense as "If Lex Luthor Were Superman's Father" (SUPERMAN #170). Here's my list... additions welcome! (We'll start with LOIS LANE comics, since that's where the idea was born in 1959.)

SUPERMAN'S GIRL FRIEND, LOIS LANE

#19, 20, 23, 25, 26 and 39: Episodes #1-6 of the original imaginary series wherein Lois marries Superman (except in #26 where LANA LANG marries Superman).
#34, 36 and 46: Lois marries a reformed Lex Luthor (episodes #1-3)
#39: Lois hates Superman
#47: If Lois were super and Clark were not.
#51: "The Three Wives of Superman"
#64 and 65: Lois marries an EVIL Lex Luthor.

SUPERMAN
#131: Not truly "Imaginary"; Lois sees a projection of the ACTUAL future but never manages to see the face of Superman's wife.
#132: mentioned above, "If Krypton Had Lived On."
#149: "The Death of Superman" -- for my (and many others') money, one of the single greatest stories in funny-book history (but then, I s'pose, ONLY for a hard-core Superman fan)!
#159: If EARTH had exploded and LOIS had gone to Krypton as a super-hero.
#162: Another great--"Superman-Red and Superman-Blue"
#166: "The Sons of Superman"
#170: "If Luthor Were Superman's FATHER"
#175: "If Luthor Were Superman's BROTHER"
#192 and 194: Clark and Lois's super-brat.
#200: Again, if Krypton had lived on.
#205: The story where it is revealed that a Marvel-Comics style space-villain was actually responsible for Krypton's destruction; this story is regarded as an "imaginary tale" by ALL intelligent readers!
#215: "The Death of Lois Lane"
#224: "Superman's Evil Super-Genius Baby"
#230-231: Lex Luthor as the hero, Clark Kent as the arch-criminal.
#300: If Kal-El Arrived on Earth in the Present.

ACTION COMICS
#279: Lois marries Samson, Lana marries Hercules (?!)
#327: "The Three Generations of Superman"
#332: If Kara had become Superwoman and Kal-El later became Superboy.
#396 and 397: Superman as a crippled beggar in the future.

SUPERMAN'S PAL, JIMMY OLSEN
#56: Jimmy and Lucy Lane's son marries Superman and Lois Lane's super-daughter. (First cousins' marrying apparently being legal in Metropolis,)
#57: Jimmy Olsen marries Supergirl (a lot of marrying goes on in these stories!).

SUPERBOY
#95: If Jor-El and Lara had reached Earth WITH their son.

ALSO: all sane readers regard as IMAGINARY stories the tale wherein Superboy finds Jor-El and Lara in a spaceship...and SUPERBOY #145 on where some AIRHEAD writer RUINED Ma and Pa Kent by (ugh) "rejuvenating" them!

Please...send additions! I'm interested!

TOMLINSON FORT -- Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. COULD YOU LIST ALL THE APPEARANCES OF JOE KUBERT'S ENEMY ACE???

This excellent strip appeared in SHOWCASE #57 and 58, STAR SPANGLED WAR STORIES #138-150, 152, 181-183, 200 (with reprints in #151, 153-161); UNKNOWN SOLDIER #251-253, MEN OF WAR #1-3, 8-10, 12-14, 19, 20, OUR ARMY AT WAR #151, 153, 155, and, no lie, with the BATMAN in DETECTIVE #404! By the way, Robert Kanigher created the character, and Kubert only handled the art on the stories through 1972.

AT A CONVENTION I SAW A COMIC THAT FEATURED THE TELEVISION "AVENGERS!" WHAT WAS THE TITLE OF THIS COMIC, AND IS IT ANY GOOD ???

The COVER title of this November, 1968, Gold Key comic is JOHN STEED AND EMMA PEEL, but the indicia on the interior lists the official title as THE AVENGERS. Need I explain the reasons for this duplicity? And, I'm sorry to say, the issue -- which was actually a reprint of two English-produced stories from the British AVENGERS strip -- was a pretty sad adaptation of one of my topmost favorite TV series.

I ALSO NEED A MAC RABOY INDEX.

I wish I could list Issue #5 for you, but you'll hafta' settle for this synopsis of the career of Emanuel "Mac" Raboy (1914-1967):

Prize (1940) on THE GREEN LAMA
Fawcett (1941-1943) on MR. SCARLET, IBIS, DR. VOODOO, ZORO THE MYSTERY MAN, BULLETMAN and (of course) CAPTAIN MARVEL JR.
Marvel (1941) on TUK THE CAVE BOY
Spark (1944-46) on GREEN LAMA again
Quality (1944-45) on KID ETERNITY
Dynamic (1944-45) on DYNAMIC MAN, YANKEE BOY
Bailey (1945) on CAPT. TRUTH

From there Raboy went on to the FLASH GORDON newspaper strip, doing the daily (1948-51) and the Sunday (1948-67). Raboy also had showings of his other art such as wood engravings at the New York Metropolitan Museum and elsewhere. Incidentally, a lot of work in the comic books i.d.ed as Raboy isn't -- they used to take his old stories, make photostats of the heroes, and draw new backgrounds around them. (Another interesting fact is that Raboy's originals done while in the service were done the same size as they were printed -- or smaller.)

CAN YOU LIST ALL THE APPEARANCES OF THE QUALITY COMICS CHARACTER UNCLE SAM, PLUS THE ARTISTS, AND PLEASE RELATE SAM'S ORIGIN???

Uncle Sam appeared in NATIONAL COMICS #1-45 (July '40-December '44), and UNCLE SAM QUARTERLY #1-8 (Fall '41-Fall '43) which became BLACKHAWK with #9. Uncle Sam was ACTUALLY Uncle Sam, the embodiment of America, who gained his strength from the faith America had in him, and lost his power when people stopped believing (Golly, what inspiring symbolism!). The long list of artists includes creator Will Eisner, plus Reed Crandall, Lou Fine, Chuck Cuidera, Alex (APT. 3-G) Kotzky, John Celardo, Al Gabriele, George Tuska, Art Gates, Gill Fox, Art Seymour and D. Zolnerowich. The only writer I know of is Otto Binder.

GEORGE LUMPKIN -- Alexander City, Alabama. WHICH ISSUES OF "BATMAN" AND "DETECTIVE" CONTAIN APPEARANCES OF HAWKMAN, THE ATOM, BAT-GIRL, MAN-BAT, THE DEMON, THE HUNTRESS, OR JASON BARD ???

It sounds as though you're interested in when these characters appeared as back-up features, so we'll approach it THAT way. Uh...I don't think that BATMAN had such second features, so we'll move on to...

DETECTIVE COMICS
Batgirl: #384, 385, 388, 389, 392, 393, 396, 397, 400, 401, 404-424, 481-on
Man-Bat: #402, 407, 416, 429, 458, 459, 481, 492 (not all of these are solo).
Hawkman: #428, 434, 438, 446, 452, 454, 455, 467, 479, 480.
The Atom: #432, 438, 463, 489.
Jason Bard: #425, 427, 429, 431, 433, 435.
The Demon: #482, 484, 485.
The Huntress did not appear in DETECTIVE, but in BATMAN FAMILY, so we'll also look at this title.
BATMAN FAMILY
Batgirl: #1-20
The Huntress: #17-20
Man-Bat: #1, 11-20

WHEN DID SUPERMAN (CLARK KENT) FIRST APPEAR AS A NEWSCASTER IN "ACTION COMICS" ???

Clark Kent as a TV newscaster is something else I'm tempted to reject as an "imaginary story" but I guess they needed to update the newspaper reporter to a more modern concept of a TV reporter in order to hold the kiddies' attention... (sigh). This came along with the "NEW Superman" concept in January, 1971 which I was breathlessly awaiting at the time! Supposedly, Superman was to have a large portion of his omnipotent strength removed (hopefully along with idiot concepts like super-ventriloquism) and be restored to an earlier version before decades of various nitwit writers had corrupted Superman with the likes of Bepo the Super-Monkey. What actually resulted was the biggest fizzle since the comet Kahootek (however ya' spell that) ...the only major change was eliminating KRYPTONITE for some reason that I've never fathomed. I thought kryptonite was great! Even the silly RED kryptonite! Well, this eventually blew over (now all we Superman fans are up against is this new mallethead idea that Clark Kent possesses super-mind-control via his Kryptonian glasses to make people see him as "puny." JEEZ!) (What was the question?)

Oh yes! Clark became a TV newsman FIRST in SUPERMAN #233 (January '71) but due to an imaginary story which was appearing in ACTION at that time, the first ACTION appearance of Clark Kent, TV newscaster, wasn't until #398 (March '71).

BILL MEISEL -- Jacksonville, Florida. A FRIEND OF MINE ONCE TOLD ME THAT THERE EXISTED PLOTS FOR ISSUES #12, 13 AND 14 OF KIRBY'S "FOREVER PEOPLE" AND ART FOR AT LEAST ISSUE #12. CAN YOU VERIFY THIS? IF IT'S TRUE, WHAT WERE THE PLOTS OF THESE STORIES???

Well, gosh-all-fishhooks, I'd imagine there exists plots and probably art for the next one or two issues of virtually every comic book that'e ever been cancelled! Work goes on for future issues, but once somebody in accounting realizes the title is losing money -- POW, it's gone out of production at a moment's notice! Why publish another issue or two of a financial loser even if the production work is complete? Right? It's only recently that comics like Marvel's SHE-HULK or MAN-THING have made any indication whatsoever that the current issue will be the swan song.

HAS ANYONE EVER ASKED JACK KIRBY WHAT HIS ORIGINAL PLANS WERE FOR "FOREVER PEOPLE" OR "NEW GODS" IF THEY HADN'T BEEN CANCELLED? AND WHO WAS IT WHO WAS ACTUALLY SUPPOSED TO POSSESS THE ANTI-LIFE EQUATION???

Anybody out there have solutions for these burning queries?

WHAT WAS THE BACKGROUND AND THE POWERS OF ULTRA-MAN WHO APPEARED FOR ABOUT TEN ISSUES IN "ALL-AMERICAN COMICS" IN THE 1940s???

My collections don't extend back quite that far...for the most part I specialize in comics of, roughly, 1947-1980. All I can tell you is that Gary Concord, the Ultra-Man, appeared in DC's ALL-AMERICAN COMICS #8-19 (November '39-October '40) and in ALL-STAR COMICS #1 (Summer '40), as drawn by Jon Blummer. Any "Golden-Age" collectors know his specifics?
[Well, I'm sure Bill will be disappointed by the information, but Gary Concord was little more than a Brick Bradford imitation set in the year 2240 A.D., and he possessed no powers to speak of. Attired in Bradford/Buck Rogers uniform, Gary led the U.S. in a battle against a Nazi-like race led by a warlord called Tor who had invaded. Gary and his side-de-camp/comedy relief Guppy directed the fight and battled inside rocket-ships and rocket-sleds. My guess is that you'll never see this "Ultra-Man" revived. MT]

HARLAND RONNING -- Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada. RECENTLY, I DECIDED TO "COME OUT OF THE CLOSET" AND REVEAL THAT MY FAVORITE FANTASIES ARE OF CHEERLEADERS. ANY CHEERLEADERS! AS A COMIC BOOK COLLECTOR, I WAS WONDERING IF YOU KNOW OF ANY COMICS THAT FEATURE CHEERLEADER STORIES! I'M SPEAKING OF FEMALE CHEERLEADERS...I'M NOT THAT KINKY!

Remember, friends, you saw it HERE FIRST.

HEINRICH UEFFING -- West Germany! I KNOW THE TWO BROTHERS FROM THE PHILIPPINES, NESTOR AND VIRGILIO REDONDO. IN THE COMIC BOOKS I ALSO FOUND FRANK, FRED AND QUICO REDONDO. WHO ARE THESE ARTISTS? SONS???

SOMEBODY'S sons, assuredly. To my understanding, there's Nestor Puruggan Redondo (artist), Virgilio Redondo (writer), and a third brother, Fracisco (a.k.a. "Frank" or "Quico") Redondo. As for a "Fred," you should understand that DC acquired the initial Philippines artwork from a studio, and not specific artists, so that when they applied credits on the stories, they sometimes copied the names wrong -- so "Fred" was probably simply an error. These brothers all worked on DC's weird comics starting in 1972.

FOR ONE ARTIST I FOUND TWO DIFFERENT NAMES, "ROMY GAMBO" AND "ROMY GAMBOA." WHICH IS CORRECT???

My information says ROMY GAMBOA. He did DC weird comics in 1972.

ARE FRED AND FRANK CARRILLO TWO DIFFERENT PEOPLE? BROTHERS???

I only know of FRED Carrillo. Again, DC probably erred in their credits. He did DC weird comics starting in 1972.

IN A DEALER CATALOGUE, I FOUND THE NAMES "PETE MORISI" AND "PETE MORSI" FOR ARTWORK BY "P.A.M." WHICH IS CORRECT???

It's Peter MORISI, whose comic career extends back to Fox (1948-50), Quality (1949-52), Marvel (1950-52), Harvey (1952), Pines (1952), Lev Gleason (1952-55), Fiction House (1952), Comic Media (1953), Nesbitt (1955), Gilberton (1961), Charlton (1957-1977), and...you guessed it! DC WEIRD COMICS IN 1972! You're really hung up on these DC weird anthologies of 1972, huh?

WHAT IS THE FULL NAME OF E.R. CRUZ (E.R. CRUZ PHILIPI?) ???

Eufronio R. Cruz. Dunno what the "R" is.

WHICH ARTIST USES THE PSEUDONYM "RUBENY" (RUBEN YANDOC?)???

Yep! You seem more than a tad interested in the Philippines artists, so you may like to have a list of those whose work has appeared in DC's various magazines: Alfredo Alcala, Nestor Redondo, Alex Nino, Gerry Talaoc, Ruben Yandoc, Frank Redondo, Fred Carrillo, E.R. Cruz, Nards Cruz, Danny Bulanadi, Franc Reyes, Noly Panaligan, Adrian Gonzales, Jun LoFamia, Vic Catan, Ernie Chan, Flor Dery, Tony DeZuniga, Romy Gamboa, Buddy Gemale, Jess Jodioman, Rudy Nebres, Abe Ocampo, Ernie Patricio, Rico Rival, Leandro Sesarego, Romeo Tanghal, Vic Geronimo, Tenny Henson, Jose Matucenio, Ruben Sosa, Ernie Guaniao, Al Bistur, Jess Ramos, Ernie Santiago, Edgardo Bercasio, Val Calaquin, Pit Capili, Tony Caravana, Rudy Florese, J.O. Ingente, Nestor Malgapo, J. Noriega, Gene Ureta, Mar Amongo, Ed Ramos, Tor Infante, Sonny Trinidad, Angel Trinidad, Noly Zamora and Steve Gan. When you think of how small the Philippines are and the number of these artists who are skilled professionals, this number is INCREDIBLE!

And if you think that that's ALL of the Philippines' work-force available, here's a list of artists whose work appears in a run of 1971 Pablo S. Gomez Philippines comics I own who haven't appeared in the U.S. as far as I know: Ruding Mesina, Fred Fernandez, F.C. Hernandez, Piring Dacanay, Ding Abubot Jr., Emy P. Gutierrez, Madz Sangalang, Adonis Bello, Zenon Men Nunag, Jun Borillo, Piping Caluso, Mel C. Capital, Rudy L. Aposti, Dionisio Roque, Donato Santos, Al Cabral, Joe Santona, David de Ocampo, P.Z. Marcelo, Rey Arcilla, Merdino A. Abella, Jun Marcos, David A. Temperante, Mel Candido, Del Santiago, Teody delos Santos, Dodge Sanchez, Lando Nino, P.F. Zapanita, Freddie Zapanta, Gary Reyes, Manuel Carrillo, Carlos Baldorado, Armando V. de Guzman, and Romeo Valdez. (Now that I think of it, some of these people may have shown up in the Marvel black and whites as well as Warren.) The number of artists involved in comics there is certainly much higher per capita than in the U.S.! MT

GARY DUANIER -- Flushing, New York. ISN'T IT SORT OF ILLEGAL FOR BACK ISSUE DEALERS TO SELL COMICS WITH MISSING PAGES OR PIECES MISSING FROM THE COVERS? IT SEEMS SO, AS THE INDICIAS IN THE COMICS SAY "THIS PERIODICAL MAY NOT BE SOLD EXCEPT BY AUTHORIZED DEALERS AND IS SOLD SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS THAT IT SHALL NOT BE SOLD OR DISTRIBUTED WITH ANY PART OF ITS COVER OR MARKINGS REMOVED, NOR IN MUTILATED CONDITION." OR DOES THIS CLAUSE APPLY ONLY TO COMICS SOLD ON THE NEWSSTAND???

If you're going to go around answering your own questions, you'll push me outtuva' job! Yes, that only refers to the original newsstand sale and is a result of the practice of the distributor getting refunds from the publishers on unsold copies. Instead of wasting money on returning large bundles of unsold issues, the distributor is allowed to merely tear off the title portion of the cover and return THAT for his refund. The remainder is SUPPOSED to be destroyed, but as we all often witness, they turn up for SALE here or there. Now far be it for me to accuse any distributors of hanky-panky, inasmuch as magazine distribution (as well as laundry and gambling in this country) is controlled by my Italian relatives, and I'm allergic to fire bombs.

DON SECREASE -- St. Louis, Missouri. WHO WAS THE ARTIST ON GOLD KEY'S "I SPY" #6???

I SPY was the work of Gold Key workhorses Mike Roy and Mike Peppe.

(They also handled issues of DANIEL BOONE, MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E. and VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA.) mt

WHO WERE THE WRITERS ON "HAWKMAN" #24,25 AND 27? "I SPY" #1-6? GOLD KEY'S "THE WILD, WILD WEST"???

The problem here is that even when external stylistic differences are identifiable among writers' work, you can't be certain that the editors' influence didn't cause them -- so unless someone came out and claimed credit for specific issues, writing credits are nearly impossible to figure out. I can tell you who MIGHT have had something to do with these, simply because they were around and working for the correct editors at the time. George Kashdan writers of the period of those HAWKMAN issues included France Herron, Bob Haney, Dave Wood and Kashdan himself, and since Raymond Marais wrote #26, he may have done others. Both Gold Keys bear the unmistakable stamp of the East Coast offices, and writers of the period include Paul S. Newman, Marshall McClintock, Leo Dorfman and Dick Wood. Beyond that, I can't be specific. mt

MIKE DENNLER -- Chicago, Illinois. COULD YOU PLEASE GIVE ME A HISTORY OF ATLAS COMICS WHICH EXISTED IN 1975? WHY DID THEY FOLD SO SOON???

It seems that Marvel Comics publisher Martin Goodman wanted to retire, and he assumed that, since he had been the head of Marvel for so long, his own choice for his successor, his son Chip, would be named by Marvel's parent company, Cadence Industries. When James Galton was chosen instead, Martin was so infuriated that he decided to put his money into direct competition with his former comics group by backing Seaboard Publications, the Atlas Comics Group.

They had big plans, beginning with fifteen titles, drawn and written by former Marvel and DC personnel and edited by Stan Lee's brother Larry Lieber. But things began to go wrong almost from the beginning; distributors and wholesalers refused to put them into the hands of retailers, claiming they were indistinguishable from Marvels -- and that there were already too many Marvels on the stands (they were then publishing over 80 different titles!). With that, the cash flow was slowed down, disgruntled artists left in droves, and eventually even Lieber left. The last couple of months, the books' publication schedule was delayed for weeks, and the final months' books never did appear. Sadly, all the possibilities of-

fered by an alternative comics company were wasted despite having had the talents of such people as Neal Adams, Archie Goodwin, Steve Ditko, Wally Wood, Dick Giordano, Frank Thorne, Russ Heath, Howard Chaykin, Rich Buckler and Howard Nostrand. Equally sad was the fact that, although Atlas bought the rights to reprint the Tower Comics line, the only reprints that made it to the stand were of TIPPY TEEN (reprinted as VICKI.)

These are the Atlas Comics which did actually appear:
THE BARBARIANS #1
BLAZING BATTLE STORIES #1
THE BRUTE #1-3
THE COUGAR #1,2
DEMON HUNTER #1
THE DESTRUCTOR #1-4
DEVILINA #1,2
FRIGHT #1
GOTHIC ROMANCES #1
THE GRIM GHOST #1-3
THE HANDS OF THE DRAGON #1
IRON JAW #1-4
MORLOCK 2001 #1-3
PHOENIX #1-4
PLANET OF VAMPIRES #1-3
POLICE ACTION #1-3
SAVAGE COMBAT TALES #1-3
THE SCORPION #1-3
TALES OF EVIL #1-3
TARGITT #1-3
THRILLING ADVENTURE STORIES #1,2
TIGER MAN #1-3
VICKI #1-4
WEIRD SUSPENSE #1-3
WEIRD TALES OF THE MACABRE #1,2
WESTERN ACTION #1
WULF THE BARBARIAN #1-4

> ASIDE FROM MARVEL'S UNION JACK AND CAPTAIN BRITAIN, I HAVE THERE BEEN ANY OTHER BRITISH SUPER-HEROES???

You mean in AMERICAN comics, I presume. Well, if you count characters from other media, there were Tarzan, the Saint, Sherlock Holmes and Robin Hood -- but I suppose you're speaking of more original and contemporary characters, as well as characters you'd never be able to mistake as anything BUT super-heroes. DC had the Shining Knight, of course, as well as the period characters Black Pirate and Silent Knight. The Gay Ghost was also British. Batman met the Knight and the Squire a few times in the '50s. Ka-Zar and the Black Knight are Marvel's contributions to characters of British heritage beyond the two you mentioned. Captain X of the R.A.F. and the Vagabond may also qualify, but like most of the early '40s characters, I've never read any of their stories. mt

> ELIZABETH FRIZELL -- Houston, Texas. WHAT HAPPENED AT THE WALT DISNEY STUDIO IN 1979 THAT CAUSED DON BLUTH AND SEVERAL OTHER ANIMATORS TO LEAVE AND FORM THEIR OWN ANIMATION COMPANY???

Well, nothing really...at least that was publicly acknowledged. Bluth and associates blasted Disney's staid conservatism after leaving, saying something to the effect that Disney himself wouldn't like what his studio was now doing. It could be that they actually believed it -- and their new film may prove it -- but from existing evidence (the sterile animation sequence in XANADU), it could very well have been a matter of gaining more creative control in their own company. mt

> M. CRAIG LEAVITT -- Modesto, California. DID DELL EVER PRINT AN ISSUE #1 OF "MELVIN THE MONSTER"??? SEVERAL OF US ARE LOOKING FOR THIS ISSUE AND HAVE NEVER SEEN OR HEARD OF ONE EXISTING.

I too don't have the first issue (chiefly because I generally ignore high-priced issues -- and this great John Stanley comic, one of the few "pure" Stanley titles in that he did both art and story, is high-priced) -- however, deductive reasoning indicates that there HAD to be a number one. I have two issues published in 1965: #2 (September) and #3 (December). #10 is a reprint of what is clearly an introductory issue; the copyright inside says 1965. I deduce it reprints the first issue, hence it must've been published. Else, why would #2 have been numbered "2"? mt

> WILLIAM MILLER -- Sherman, Texas. WHAT COMIC BOOKS DID THE HANNA-BARBERA CHARACTERS LOOPY DE LOOP, WALLY GATOR, TOUCHE TURTLE, LIPPY THE LION AND PETER POTAMUS APPEAR IN (NAMES AND NUMBERS, PLEASE)???

At your service. Unfortunately, my H-B collection is not yet complete, so unless obvious, filler strips included in FLINTSTONES #58, GOLDEN COMICS DIGEST #11, HUCKLEBERRY HOUND #30,36, JETSONS #12,34, LIPPY THE LION #1, MAGILLA GORILLA #5,10, SNAGGLEPUSS #4, SNOER AND BLABBER, DETECTIVES #2, TOP CAT #8,10,11,15,26,28,29,30, QUICK DRAW McGRAW #10,11, YOGI BEAR #15,28,41, GOLDEN PICTURE STORY BOOK #1, 2 and WHITMAN COMICS #1-6 are missing from this list. To make things easier, no text stories are included, and because they are NOT worth the trouble of indexing, the Charltons are omitted (The Marvel H-B appearances are so readily available that you probably have them already.) In the infamous I.C. tradition, I've decided to list all the H-B funny animal characters from '57-'66, answering future requests in advance.

*-one page filler strip only
Atom Ant: ATOM ANT #1; GOLDEN COMICS DIGEST #2,7*
Augie Doggie: AUGIE DOGGIE #1; DELL GIANT #41,44; FLINTSTONE AT THE WORLD'S FAIR; GOLDEN COMICS DIGEST #2*; HANNA-BARBERA BANDWAGON #1,2; HUCKLEBERRY HOUND #35; HUCKLEBERRY HOUND FOR PRES-

[Continued on page 19]

the 2nd ANNIVERSARY EPISODE OF Captain KenTucky

BEING EPISODE 100 ©1981 D.J. Rose

MY VISIT TO HOLLYWOOD WAS INTERESTING... BUT THAT MOVIE PRODUCER'S VERSION OF MY LIFE STORY WAS A CROCK OF BEANS! I ONLY WISH I COULD'VE TOLD HIM THE TRUE STORY... BUT THAT WOULD GIVE AWAY MY ALTER-EGO OF REPORTER LANCE(P) PERTWILLABY... FOR WHAT GOOD IT IS, I'VE YET TO FIGURE THAT OUT.

I COULDN'T TELL HIM HOW, ON OCTOBER 6th, 1979, I WAS DOING AN ON-THE-SPOT INVESTIGATION FOR A LOUISVILLE TIMES ARTICLE ON THE SEWER CLEAN-UP OF THAT "OCTA" AND "HEXA" MESS.

I COULDN'T TELL HIM HOW THAT SAME GUY CHOSE THAT MOMENT TO MAKE ANOTHER ILLEGAL DUMP AT THAT SAME LOCATION... THIS TIME OF A RARE AND OBSCURE RADIOACTIVE WASTE CHEMICAL CALLED "OCTA-HEXA-GLOP"!

I COULDN'T TELL HIM HOW, SOMEHOW, WHAT I SWALLOWED OF THE SLOP GAVE ME SUPER-POWERS! I WISH I COULD TELL HIM THAT IT GAVE ME STUFF LIKE X-RAY VISION... BUT WHEN I TAKE MY GLASSES OFF TO BECOME C.K., I STILL CAN'T EVEN SEE MY SUPER-HAND IN FRONT OF MY SUPER-FACE.

BLECH!

SO I RESCUED A 55 GALLON DRUM OF THE "OCTA-HEXA-GLOP" BEFORE IT WAS WASHED AWAY AND HID IT ON THE ROOF OF THE FIRST NATIONAL TOWER WHERE I BASE MY OPERATIONS... I NEED ONLY CARRY A VIAL OF IT WITH ME TO DRINK WHEN FATE CALLS ON THE SERVICES OF C.K.!

SQUINT.

KEEP OUT! SECRET OCTA-HEXA-GLOP SUPPLY!

C.K.'s PRE-DECODED 2nd ANNIVERSARY SECRET MESSAGE: ONE OF MY CREDOS... A QUOTE ATTRIBUTED TO THE LATE, GREAT WALT KELLY: "DON'T TAKE LIFE SO SERIOUS, SON! IT AIN'T NOHOW PERMANENT!"

I'M GLAD I DIDN'T HAFTA TELL HIM HOW, FOR NEARLY 2 YEARS, NO MATTER HOW HARD I WORKED AT THIS HERO BUSINESS, THE PUBLIC IGNORED ME! INGRATES! I SWEAR... THOSE BUILDINGS AND HELICOPTERS JUST LEAPED AT ME FROM OUTTA' NOWHERE!

IT WASN'T MY FAULT!

GEE WHIZ!

OOPS

THE ONLY THING HE PROBABLY DIDN'T KNOW WAS HOW I FINALLY GAINED WORLD-FAME WHEN I CHALLENGED MUHAMMAD ALI TO A FIGHT. NOW IT'S A NEW DAY FOR C.K.!

BLAM!

the MIDDLE of NEXT WEEK Straight ahead

I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT AWAITS THE BRAND-NEW FAMOUS CAPTAIN KENTUCKY BACK IN LOUIS—VER.. WHAT'S THAT UP AHEAD?

CRUNCH!

MOUNT RUSHMORE?!

DAMN! I'M OFF-COURSE!

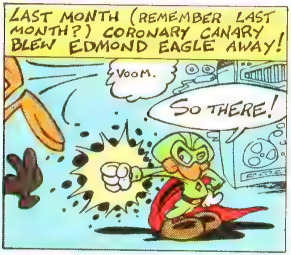
THAT'S ENOUGH OF THAT! RIGHT NOW THE CARTOONIST HAS SOME ANNOUNCEMENTS TO MAKE? BEGINNING NEXT WEEK, I'M GONNA' CORRECT AN ERROR I'VE LET SLIP FOR 2 YEARS NOW: THE COLOR OF C.K.'S CAPE! BEING A KENTUCKY STATE FLAG, IT SHOULD BE DARK BLUE--BUT I'VE BEEN TOO LAZY TO CUT THAT EXTRA BIT OF "ZIP-A-TONE" TO COVER IT. BUT FROM NOW ON: A DARK CAPE!

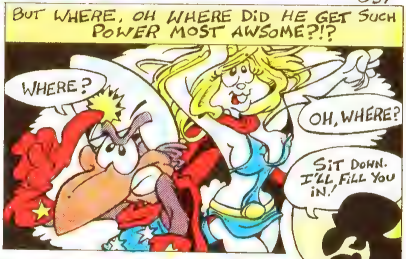
NEXT: MY ANNUAL ANNIVERSARY GIVE-AWAY! LAST YEAR I GAVE COPIES OF THAT "CAPTAIN KENTUCKY COLLECTION" REPRINT EDITION YOU'VE SEEN IN BOOKSTORES? WELL, I DON'T HAVE #2 READY YET, BUT WE DO HAVE SOME AUTOGRAPHED 8X10 GLOSSIES OF C.K. FLYING OVER LOUISVILLE? REAL PHOTOS! I'LL SEND ONE TO EACH OF THE FIRST 25 PEOPLE WHO CALL ME (ONCE I GET HOME) AT: 458-5591* HOOHAH!!!

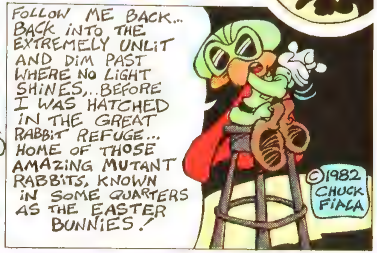
(* OFFER EXPIRED)

AND NEXT WEEK: A NEW STORY WITH MORE ACTION AND A LIL' LESS JABBER!

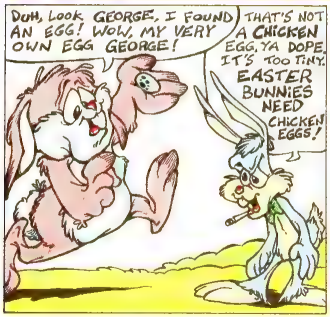
BULLET ★ ★ ★ FOWL OF FORTUNE — CROW — by CHUCK FIALA

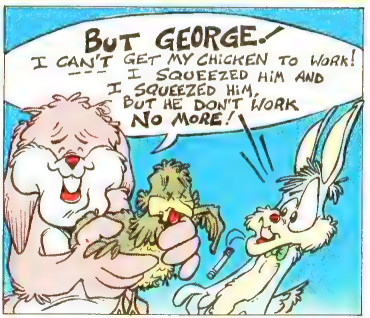





FOLLOW ME BACK... BACK INTO THE EXTREMELY UNLIT AND DIM PAST WHERE NO LIGHT SHINES,..BEFORE I WAS HATCHED IN THE GREAT RABBIT REFUGE... HOME OF THOSE AMAZING MUTANT RABBITS, KNOWN IN SOME QUARTERS AS THE EASTER BUNNIES!
©1982 CHUCK FIALA

"LET US FIRST LOOK AT TWO EASTER BUNNIES IN PARTICULAR; GEORGE AND JUNIOR RABBIT".


DUH, LOOK GEORGE, I FOUND AN EGG! WOW, MY VERY OWN EGG GEORGE!
THAT'S NOT A CHICKEN EGG, YA DOPE IT'S TOO TINY. EASTER BUNNIES NEED CHICKEN EGGS!



DICK DUCK, DUCK DICK

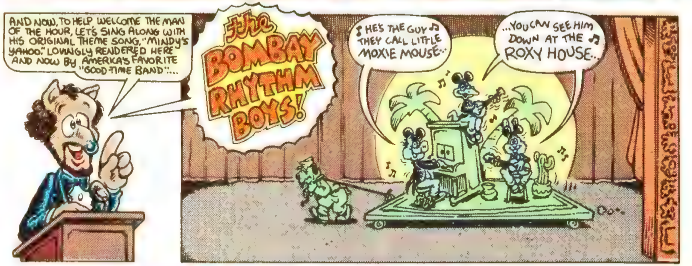
CASE # 419 A

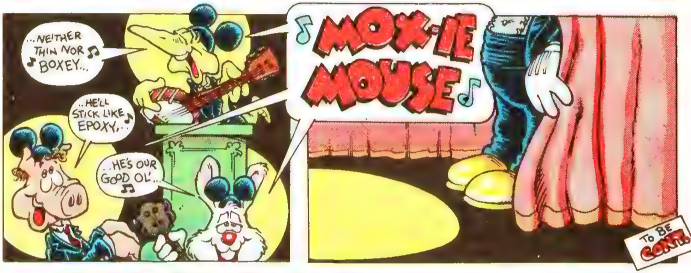
"HEROES & VILLAINS"

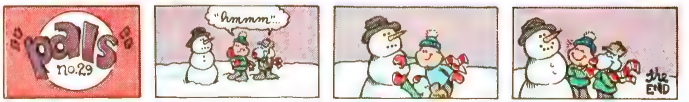
CHAPTER: 12

by Jim Engel ©1982

THE EVENING CONTINUES AS A PARADE OF HOLLYWOOD GREATS COMES FORWARD TO
EXPRESS THEIR LOVE AND ADMIRATION FOR MOXIE MOUSE..
ACTORS, DIRECTORS, FELLOW COMICS, EACH WITH HIS OR HER OWN PERSONAL MEMORY
OR ANECDOTE ABOUT "THE GREAT ONE" "MR. LAUGHS" "THE KING OF COMEDY"..
..IT WOULD SEEM THAT HE HAS NEVER MADE AN ENEMY IN HIS LIFE...


AND NOW, TO HELP WELCOME THE MAN OF THE HOUR, LET'S SING ALONG WITH HIS ORIGINAL THEME SONG, "MINDY'S YAMOS" LOVINGLY REMASTERED HERE AND NOW BY AMERICA'S FAVORITE "GOOD TIME BAND"...
THE BOMBAY RHYTHM BOYS!
♪ HE'S THE GUY ♫ THEY CALL LITTLE MOXIE MOUSE..
..YOU CAN SEE HIM DOWN AT THE ♫ ROXY HOUSE..





CAPTAIN KENTUCKY
EPISODE 107
©1981 Don Rosa
SUPER-HITCHHIKING THROUGH THE LUSH GRAY LOUISVILLE SKY... THAT CHAMPION OF TRUTH AND JUSTICE AND STUFF:
AH...FINALLY! THERE'S LOUISVILLE BELOW. I WISH I COULD THANK THOSE GUYS FOR THE LIFT... I CAUGHT A NICE SNOOZE. BUT IT'S TIME TO GO...
THAT WAS A NICE LIL' VACATION ON THE WEST COAST... BUT NOW IT'S TIME THAT LANCELOT PERTWILLABY GOT BACK TO WORK AT THE "LOUISVILLE TIMES"!
I'LL ZIP THROUGH THAT STOCK ROOM WINDOW AND DO MY QUICK-CHANGE.
SOMEBODY OUGHTTA REPLACE THE LIGHT BULB IN THERE? NOW-- LET'S SEE WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON IN DERBY TOWN WHILE I WAS IN CALIFORNIA. THE RACE FOR MAYOR SHOULD BE GETTING HOT ABOUT NOW.
JANITOR
SURE ENOUGH...THERE'S HARVEY SLOANE AND GEORGE CLARK ON TV RIGHT NOW. BUT... TOGETHER? AND WHAT ARE THEY SO UPSET ABOUT?
IT'S JUST UNFAIR! THAT'S ALL!
YES, WE'RE BOTH GOING ON THE RECORD CONCERNING THE UNFAIRNESS OF THIS NEW MAYORAL CANDIDATE THAT THE AFTERNOON PAPER ANNOUNCES IS GOING TO BE A WRITE-IN
HE'S NOT EVEN AN OFFICIAL CANDIDATE YET BUT HE'S FAR AHEAD OF EITHER OF US IN THE SURVEYS! IT'S UNFAIR COMPETITION.
(red.)
NON SMOKERS' SECTION: THIS IS THE NO SMOKING AREA OF THE NEWSPAPER. THANK YOU FOR NOT SMOKING WHILE READING THIS COMIC STRIP! AND I'M NOT KIDDING!
THIS GUY HAS CAPTURED THE HEARTS AND IMAGINATION OF THE CITY... THE NATION... SURE? BUT WHAT POLITICAL EXPERIENCE DOES HE HAVE? HE'S NOT A DOCTOR? WHY, HE'S NOT EVEN A HAMBURGER MOGUL?
YEAH, BUT HE, TOO, WEARS ONLY ONE COLOR SHIRT. WHO KNOWS WHAT STRANGE POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS SUCH AN ODD CHARACTER MIGHT HAVE? WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT HIS REAL NAME IS?
(still red.)
WOULD SOMEBODY ASK MR. SLOANE TO STOP WALKING ALL AROUND THE PODIUM! WE CAN'T KEEP THE CAMERAS ON HIM!
HOW CAN MERE POLITICIANS COMPETE AGAINST SUCH A BELOVED PUBLIC IDOL? IT'S JUST NOT FAIR!
BUT, OF COURSE, THE FACT REMAINS THAT THE POLLS INDICATE THIS WRITE-IN CANDIDATE WILL WIN THE RACE FOR MAYOR OF LOUISVILLE!
BY GOLLY...WE MIGHT LOSE?
NOW BACK TO OUR REGULARLY SCHEDULED VAST WASTELAND.
TOSS ME AN AFTERNOON PAPER, WILL YA?
THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING! I'M... I'M ALMOST AFRAID TO LOOK! MY ONLY HOPE IS THAT IT'LL BE PRESTO THE MAGIC CLOWN!
FLUP!
The Louisville Times
BY PUBLIC MANDATE:
CAPTAIN KENTUCKY FOR MAYOR!
TO BE CONTINUED!

[Continued from page 14]

IDENT #1141; MAGILLA GORILLA #3; QUICK DRAW McGRAW #1–14; TOP CAT #1–4; YOGI BEAR #10, 13; YOGI BEAR BIRTHDAY PARTY #1271 WHITMAN COMICS #5

Breezly Bruin & Sneezly Seal: PETER POTAMUS #1

Hokey Wolf & Ding-a-Ling: DELL GIANT #44; FLINTSTONES AT THE WORLD'S FAIR; HANNA-BARBERA BANDWAGON #1, 2; HUCKLEBERRY HOUND #12–19, 21; YOGI BEAR #10, 13; YOGI BEAR BIRTHDAY PARTY #1171

Huckleberry Hound: DELL GIANT #31, 41, 44; FLINTSTONES AT THE W.F.; HUCK AND YOGI WINTER SPORTS #1310; HUCKLEBERRY HOUND #1–43; H. H. FOR PRESIDENT #1141; MAGILLA GORILLA #3; YOGI BEAR #13, 31; Y.B. BIRTHDAY PARTY #1171 GOLDEN COMICS DIGEST #2, 7, 11; GOLDEN PICTURE STORY BOOK #1; WHITMAN COMICS #2; MARCH OF COMICS #199, 214, 235

Lippy the Lion and Hardy Har Har: CAVE KIDS #4; FLINTSTONES AT THE W.F.; HANNA-BARBERA BANDWAGON #1–3; HUCKLEBERRY HOUND #18, 19, 22; JETSONS #8, 32; MAGILLA GORILLA #3; QUICK DRAW McGRAW #12, 13; TOP CAT #9; YOGI BEAR #18; LIPPY THE LION AND HARDY HAR HAR #1

Loopy de Loop: HANNA-BARBERA BANDWAGON #1, 2; PIXIE AND DIXIE AND MR. JINKS #1; WHITMAN COMICS #5

Hillbilly Bears: ATOM ANT #1

Magilla Gorilla: MAGILLA GORILLA #1–10; GOLDEN COMICS DIGEST #2*

Mushmouse and Punkin Puss: MAGILLA GORILLA #4, 6, 7, 9; MUSHMOUSE AND PUNKIN PUSS #1

Peter Potamus: PETER POTAMUS #1

Pixie and Dixie and Mr. Jinks: DELL GIANT #31, 41, 44; FLINTSTONES AT THE W.F. (Jinks only); GOLDEN COMICS DIGEST #2, 7; GOLDEN PICTURE STORY BOOK #2; H-B BANDWAGON #1, 2, 3*; HUCK & YOGI WINTER SPORTS #1310; HUCKLEBERRY HOUND #1–25, 27, 28, 34, 35, 38–41, 43; H. H. FOR PRESIDENT #1141; MAGILLA GORILLA #3; PIXIE AND DIXIE AND MR. JINKS #1112, 1196, 1264, 207, #1; YOGI BEAR #13, 20, 22–27, 42; Y.B. BIRTHDAY PARTY #1171; WHITMAN COMICS #3

Precious Pupp: ATOM ANT #1

Quick Draw McGraw: DELL GIANT #41, 44; FLINTSTONES #16; FLINTSTONES AT THE W.F.; HUCK AND YOGI WINTER SPORTS #1310; HUCKLEBERRY HOUND #34, 35; H.H. FOR PRESIDENT #1141; GOLDEN COMICS DIGEST #2, 7; MAGILLA GORILLA #3; QUICK DRAW McGRAW #1–15; YOGI BEAR #10, 13, 19, 21, 30, 32, 34–36; Y.B. BIRTHDAY PARTY #1171; WHITMAN COMICS #6

Ricochet Rabbit: MAGILLA GORILLA #4, 6, 7, 9

Ruff and Reddy: HANNA-BARBERA BANDWAGON #1, 2; RUFF AND REDDY #1–11

Secret Squirrel: SECRET SQUIRREL #1

Snagglepuss: DELL GIANT #44; FLINTSTONES AT THE W.F.; H-B BANDWAGON #1–3; MAGILLA GORILLA #3; MR. & MRS. J. EVIL SCIENTIST #1; SNAGGLEPUSS #1–4; TOP CAT #12; YAKKY DOODLE #1; YOGI BEAR #4–11, 13, 14, 18, 37–39; Y.B. BIRTHDAY PARTY #1171

Snooper and Blabber: DELL GIANT #41, 44; FLINTSTONES AT THE W.F.; GOLDEN COMICS DIGEST #2, 7*; H-B BANDWAGON #1, 2; HUCK & YOGI WINTER SPORTS #1310; HUCKLEBERRY HOUND #35; H. H. FOR PRESIDENT #1141; JETSONS #6, 11; QUICK DRAW McGRAW #1–14; SNAGGLEPUSS #1?, 2, 3; SNOOPER & BLABBER, DETECTIVES #1–3; WHITMAN COMICS #6; Y.B. BIRTHDAY PARTY #1171; YOGI BEAR #13

Squiddly Diddly: SECRET SQUIRREL #1

Top Cat: FLINTSTONES AT THE WORLD'S FAIR; H-B BANDWAGON #2, 3*; HUCKLEBERRY HOUND #18; MAGILLA GORILLA #3; SNOOPER AND BLABBER #1, 3; TOP CAT #1–31

Touche Turtle: FLINTSTONES #14; FLINTSTONES AT THE W.F.; H-B BANDWAGON #1–3; HUCKLEBERRY HOUND #18, 19; JETSONS #7, 10, 13, 15–22, 33, 35, 36; MAGILLA GORILLA #3; MR. & MRS. J. EVIL SCIENTIST #3; QUICK DRAW McGRAW #13; TOP CAT #5–7, 14, 27, 31; GOLDEN COMICS DIGEST #7

Wally Gator: CAVE KIDS #2, 3, 5; FLINTSTONES AT THE W.F.; H-B BANDWAGON #1–3; HUCKLEBERRY HOUND #18, 19, 22; JETSONS #8, 32; MAGILLA GORILLA #3; QUICK DRAW McGRAW #12, 13; TOP CAT #9; YOGI BEAR #18; GOLDEN COMICS DIGEST #2*, 7*

Winsome Witch: SECRET SQUIRREL #1

Yogi Bear: DELL GIANT #31, 41, 44; FLINTSTONES AT THE W.F.; GOLDEN COMICS DIGEST #2, 7, 11; GOLDEN STORY PICTURE BOOK #2; HUCK & YOGI WINTER SPORTS #1310; HUCKLEBERRY HOUND #1–11, 35, 37, 42; H. H. FOR PRESIDENT #1141; MAGILLA GORILLA VS. YOGI BEAR FOR PRESIDENT #3; YOGI BEAR #1–42; Y.B. BIRTHDAY PARTY #1171; Y.B. VISITS THE U. N. #1349; WHITMAN COMICS #1; HEY THERE, IT'S YOGI BEAR; MARCH OF COMICS #253, 265, 279, 291, 309, 319, 337, 344

Yakky Doodle and Chopper: AUGIE DOGGIE #1; CAVE KIDS #6, 7; DELL GIANT #44; H-B BANDWAGON #1, 2; HUCKLEBERRY HOUND #29, 31–34; MAGILLA GORILLA #3; GOLDEN COMICS DIGEST #2, 7; YAKKY DOODLE #1; YOGI BEAR #4–17, 29, 40; Y.B. BIRTHDAY PARTY #1171

Also be advised that Western Publishing produced reams of material for foreign distribution in the early-mid '60s featuring all of the above characters, none of which ever appeared in the U.S. mt

That's all on hand for this issue. Until next time, please send all your questions, suggestions, corrections and "Hall of Fame" nominations to me:

KENO DON ROSA
1603 Woodluck Avenue
Louisville, Kentucky 40205

Be seeing you...

Obituaries

HARRY HANAN, creator of the LOUIE comic strip, died in Westfield, New Jersey January 19, 1982. Born in Liverpool, England December 14, 1916, he studied at the Liverpool College of Art, graduating before serving in the British Artillery during World War II as a captain. Before launching LOUIE in 1947, he contributed editorial cartoons to the London newspaper THE PEOPLE for three years before emigrating to the U.S. in 1948. LOUIE ran as a daily and Sunday pantomime humor strip from 1948 to 1975, and at one time had the distinction of having the largest circulation of any strip outside the U.S. His work was exhibited in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Walker Gallery in New York City. He was a member of the National Cartoonists Society. He is survived by his wife Marjorie, daughter Gaynor and sons Martin and Peter.

FRED HARMAN, creator of the long-running comic strip RED RYDER, died January 2, 1982 at the age of 79 in Phoenix due to complications following a stroke suffered December 27. He was raised on a ranch in Colorado and in fact was a cowboy for a while before becoming an illustrator during World War I. Eventually he became part of the Film Ad Co. along with Walt Disney and Ub Iwerks, the fledgling animation studio which led to the Disney Studios. When Disney and friends went west, Harman returned to Colorado and his own ranch where he did advertising work until selling his first comic strip, a western called BRONC PEELER in 1934. In 1938, in order to get a better deal with the syndicates, he created RED RYDER for NEA. Ultimately, the strip became so popular that a movie series was launched based on the strip which ran to some forty films. He retired the strip in 1962 to concentrate on serious painting, and he helped found the Cowboy Artists Association. His work was dis-

played in many of the most prestigious museums in the country, and in latter years he refused to acknowledge his earlier comic-strip work as being anything to be proud of. When we were reprinting RED RYDER in the Menamonee Falls GAZETTE, Harman let it be known through channels that he didn't care to be reminded of the strip. When Dell Comics began to do original RED RYDER and LITTLE BEAVER comics in the mid-'40s to mid-'50s, Harman contributed many covers, although his signature was also applied to many interior stories he did not draw.

He is survived by his wife and a son.

HARRY A. CHESLER, one of comic book history's pioneers in producing original material for the field, died December 28, 1981 of natural causes, although he had been in the hospital to check out a back complaint which turned out to be an undiagnosed kidney problem. Chesler began what is believed to be the first shop devoted to producing comic-book stories and artwork on an assembly-line basis. In the summer of 1936 he advertised for cartoonists in New York City, and soon was running a service which could create and produce an entire new magazine for prospective publishers on demand. Nearly every one of the early comic book companies utilized his service, as the Chesler shop produced full issues of many of the earliest comic books, most of them featuring six or seven brand-new, separate characters in five to ten page stories. Chesler served as editor of these tales, and he

[continued on page 37]

Pacific Coming Comics

The new bi-monthly MS. MYSTIC series is set for a March-April release

date, as written and drawn by Neal Adams. The heroine presents herself as a 18th-century witch who escaped execution by going to a different dimension where she remained trapped until ecological scientists accidentally free her. Drawing her powers from the earth, sun and air, she controls the forces of nature as she attempts to prevent man from destroying the world by polluting it to death, though polluters are the least of her foes.

STARSLAYER No. 3, May. A distress beacon emanating from ruined war ships of Venus bring Torin, Tamara and Sam into deadly danger from the unexpected inhabitants. Mike Grell did the story and art. Dave Stevens' THE ROCKETEER is the back-up story. Grell did the cover. [February]

CAPTAIN VICTORY No. 5, June. A lighter-hearted story featuring the Goozlebobber is the back-up to the Captain Victory story in this issue, both by Jack Kirby and Mike Thibedeaux. They also did the cover. [March]

DC Coming Comics

ARAK/SON OF THUNDER No. 9, May. "Out of the City of the Dead" is by Roy Thomas, Ernie Colon and Rodin Rodriguez. Arak and Valda's search for Malagigi continues. Plus: the Viking Prince in "Frozen Hell For a Viking, Part II" by Robert Kanigher and Jan Duursema. Colon did the cover. [2/4]

THE BEST OF DC No. 24, May. The LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES are the stars of the issue, and appear in a new story, "Murder in Glass" by Paul Levitz, Carmine Infantino and Rodin Rodriguez. George Perez contributes 18 pages of "Legion Fact Sheets," containing never-before-seen Legionnaire costumes, and reprints include: "Invisible Invader" by Nelson Bridwell and George Tuska from SUPERBOY #176; "The Colossal Failure" by Jim Shooter, Curt Swan and Jack Abel from ADVENTURE #371, "The School For Super-Villains" by Shooter, Swan and Abel from ADVENTURE #372; and "The Ghost of Ferro Lad" by Shooter, Swan and George Klein from ADVENTURE #357. Ernie Colon did the cover. [2/4]

DC COMICS PRESENTS No. 46, May. "The Chaos Network" is by Gerry Conway, Rich Buckler and Bob Smith. Superman and Firestorm team up in a book-lengther. Ross Andru and Frank Giacoia did the cover. [2/4]

DC SPECIAL BLUE RIBBON DIGEST No. 21, May. OUR ARMY AT WAR is the theme and stories include: "The Fighting Guns of Easy" by Robert Kanigher and Joe Kubert (OAAW #146); "Stop the War--I Want to Get Off" by Robert Kanigher and Joe Kubert (OAAW #196 and 269); "Horseless" by Kanigher and Ric Estrada (OAAW #269); "My Buddy the Dinosaur" by Kanigher and Kubert (STAR SPANGLED WAR STORIES #124); Enemy Ace in "Reach For the Heavens" by Kanigher and Kubert (SSWS #149); "White Devil, Yellow Devil" by Kanigher and Alex Toth (SSWS #164); Haunted Tank in "Let Me Live, Let Me Die" by Kanigher and Russ Heath; and "The Face of War" by Bob Haney, Ross Andru and Mike Esposito. The balance consists of number of reprints of Battle Albums. Joe Kubert did the cover. [2/4]

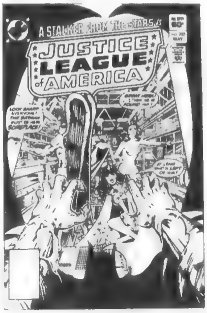
GHOSTS No. 112, May. The final issue of this long-running title includes "Let the Punishment Fit the Crime" by Robert Kanigher, Howard Bender and Ken Landgraf; "Pirate's Skull" by Jack Harris, Mark Texiera and Tony DeZun-

iga; and "A Little Knowledge" by Stan Timmons and Arthur Geroche. Dave Manak did the cover. [2/4]

JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA No. 202, May.: "Star Fall" is by Gerry Conway, Dan Heck and Brett Breeding. The JLA are endangered when another satellite appears in Earth's orbit. George Perez did the cover. [2/4]

WEIRD WAR TALES No. 111, May. "The Doomsday Robots" is by Robert Kanigher and Dan Spiegle. The Creature Commandos and the G.I. Robot team up in a book-lengther. Ross Andru and Frank Giacoia did the cover. [2/4]

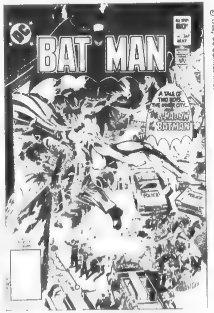
WONDER WOMAN No. 291, May. "Judgement in Infinity" is by Paul Levitz, Roy Thomas, Gene Colan and Frank McLaughlin. A special three issue mini-series begins with this story which features the Adjudicator and the Four Horsemen of the Apocolypse versus Wonder Woman and virtually every current DC super-heroine. Ross Andru and Dick Giordano did the cover. [2/4]



BATMAN No. 347, May. "The Shadow of the Batman" is by Roger Slifer, Trevor Von Eeden and Pablo Marcos. Two would-be bank robbers consider the consequences if they should be confronted by the Batman. Plus: three "Just-a-Moment" mysteries: "The Impossible Murders" with Batman, "Artifact" with Bruce Wayne, and "The Nervous Nephew" with Alfred, all by Robin Snyder, Trevor Von Eeden and Larry Mahlstedt. Rich Buckler and Dick Giordano did the cover. [2/11]

THE FLASH No. 309, May. "How Do You Kill a Legend?" is by Cary Bates, Carmine Infantino and Dennis Jensen. It's into the past for Flash as he goes back to view his very own origin. Also, Dr. Fate appears in "Tomorrow is Forever" by Martin Pasko, Keith Giffen and Larry Mahlstedt. Infantino and Dick Giordano did the cover. [2/11]

G.I. COMBAT No. 241, May. The Haunted Tank tales are "A Day In the Life of a Tank" and "The First Battle" by Robert Kanigher, Sam Glanzman and Dick Ayers. The O.S.S./Super-Spy story is "The Secret Everybody Knew" by Kanigher and E.R. Cruz; and other stories include "Sad Song For A Slain Soldier" by Robin Snyder and Angel Trinidad; and "Million-Dollar Hero" by David Allikas and Edgar Berrasio. Joe Kubert did the cover. [2/11]



JONAH HEX No. 60, May. "The Domain of the Warlord" is by Michael Fleisher, Dick Ayers and Tony DeZuniga. Also included is another El Diablo story, "New Sabbath" by Gary Cohn, Ayers and DeZuniga. DeZuniga did the cover. [2/11]

THE NEW TEEN TITANS No. 19, May. "The Light Fantastic" is by Marv Wolfman, George Perez and Romeo Tanghal. Even as ancient Hindi gods are threatening, the Titans must reckon with the intrusion of Dr. Light into the picture. Perez did the cover. [2/11]

SAGA OF THE SWAMP THING No. 1, May. "What Peace There May Be in Silence" is by Martin Pasko and Tom Yeates. The early-seventies' sensation is given new life by the imminent release of the film version, and this new series hopes to take advantage of the tie-in. The regular back-up feature will be the Phantom Stranger, who appears first in "In Shadowed Depths" by Bruce Jones and Dan Spiegle. Yeates did the cover. [2/11]

SUPERMAN No. 371, May. "Kandor Lives Again" is by Len Wein, Curt Swan

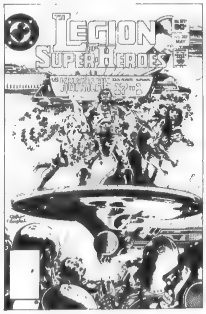
and Dave Hunt. The bottle-city of Kandor is revived, albeit with a new set of residents. Plus, the Private Life of Clark Kent moves over from SUPERMAN FAMILY with "Mind Over Money" by Bob Rozakis, John Calnan and Pablo Marcos. Ross Andru and Frank Giacoia did the cover. [2/11]

THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD No. 186, May. "The Treasure of the Hawk-God's Tomb" is by Dan Mishkin, Gary Cohn and Jim Aparo. Batman and Hawkman take on one of Hawkman's adversaries. Also, Nemesis appears in "In The Lion's Den" by Cary Burkett and Dan Spiegle. Rich Buckler and Dick Giordano did the cover. [2/18]

GREEN LANTERN No. 152, May. "Star Cycle" is by Marv Wolfman, Dan Mishkin, Gary Cohn, Joe Staton and Mike DeCarlo. Banished from Earth by the Guardians, GL must begin his adventures in deep space. The Tale of the Green Lantern Corps is "Paradise World" by Paul Kupperberg and Carmine Infantino. Joe Staton did the cover. [2/18]

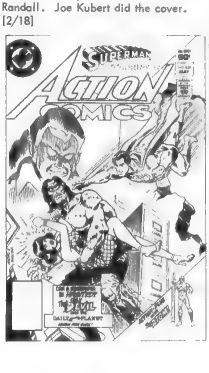
HOUSE OF MYSTERY No. 304, May. I, Vampire begins the issue with "Welcome to Eternity" by Bruce Jones and Ernie Colon; other tales are "Stalk and Slash" by Bill Kelley and Angel Trinidad, "Directions" by Len Wein and Dan Spiegle, and "Hellride" by Dan Mishkin and Gary Cohn, and Tor Infante. Michael Kaluta did the cover. [2/18]

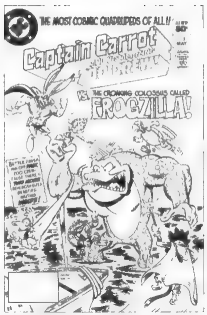
THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES No. 287, May. "Save the Suicide Squad" is



by Paul Levitz, Keith Giffen and Bruce Patterson. The Espionage Squad infiltrates the world of the Khund. Also: "Prologue to Darkness" by Levitz, Pat Broderick and Patterson. Giffen and Romeo Tanghal did the cover. [2/18]

SGT. ROCK No. 364, May. "Take Me Home" is by Robert Kanigher and Frank Redondo. Other stories include: "Curse of K'Iya" by Jan Duursema; and "No-Hitter" by Jack C. Harris and Ron Randall. Joe Kubert did the cover. [2/18]





THE SUPERMAN FAMILY No. 218, May. Supergirl battles a Greek goddess in the lead story by Paul Kupperberg, Winslow Mortimer and Vince Colletta. "The Kryptonite Man" by Nelson Bridwell, Kurt Schaffenberger and Frank Chiaramonte stars Mr. and Mrs. Superman. Lois Lane appears in "Strangers in the Snow" by Tamsyn O'Flynn, Bob Oksner and Vince Colletta. And Jimmy Olsen rounds things out with "The Ones That Almost Got Away" by Kupperberg, Jose Delbo and Joe Giella, which tells the origin of Jimmy's signal watch. Ross Andru and Dick Giordano did the cover. [2/18]

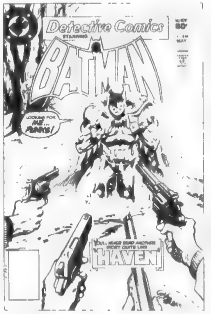
WARLORD No. 57, May. "Double Entendre" is by Mike Grell, Mark Texiera and Mike DeCarlo. Travis is literally the man in the iron mask. Then, "Death By Fire" by Paul Kupperberg and Jan Duursema continues the saga of Arlon, Lord of Atlantis. Grell did the cover. [2/18]

ACTION COMICS No. 531, May. "The Devil and the Daily Planet" is by Marv Wolfman, Joe Staton and Dan Adkins. The Planet's in danger -- and it's a ghost from its past which may save it. Plus, The Atom stars in "No Time Off For Heroes" by Bob Rozakis, Alex Saviuk and Vince Colletta. Ross Andru and Dick Giordano did the cover. [2/25]

ALL-STAR SQUADRON No. 9, May. "Should Old Acquaintence Be Destroyed" is by Roy Thomas, Adrian Gonzales and Jerry Ordway. The second half of the unpublished STEEL #6 (by Gerry Conway, Don Heck and Ordway) is featured as the battle with Baron Blitzkrieg appears. Joe Kubert did the cover. [2/25]

CAPTAIN CARROT AND HIS AMAZING ZOO CREW No. 3, May. "And Now... A.C.R.O.S.T.I.C." is by Roy Thomas, Scott Shaw and Bob Smith. The Zoo Crew encounters a trio of creatures including Frogzilla and Jailhouse Roc. Shaw and Smith did the cover. [2/25]

DETECTIVE COMICS No. 514, May. "Haven" is by Len Wein, Dan Newton and Frank Chiaramonte. Featuring: the return of Maxie Zeus. Then Batgirl stars in "Sharper Than a Serpent's Tooth" by Cary Burkett, Jose Delbo and Joe Giella Rich Buckler and Dick Giordano did the cover. [2/25]

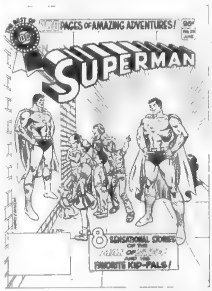


THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY No. 29, May. "The Man Who Took the Small Out of Smallville: is by Cary Bates, Kurt Schaffenberger and Dave Hunt. Also: Dial "H" For Hero's story, "The Record-Breaking Debut of the Disc Jockey" by Nelson Bridwell, Bob Rozakis, Jose Delbo and Frank Chiaramonte. Kurt Schaffenberger did the cover. [2/2

THE UNEXPECTED No. 222, May. "Lilacs in February" is by Arnold Drake and Tor Infante; "Woro and the Liquid Man" is by Steve Ditko and Gary Martin; "Act

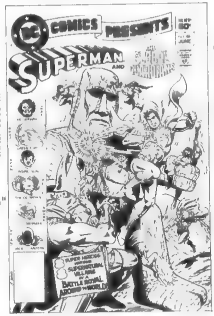
of Contrition" is by Martin Pasko, Sylvestri and John Celardo; and "Observation" is by Watson, Clark and Celardo. This is the final issue. Steve Ditko did the cover. [2/25]

UNKNOWN SOLDIER No.264, June. , "Death Sub, USN" is by Bob Haney, Dick Ayers and Gerry Talaoc. Plus: Tomahawk in "Upon the Gallows Tree" by Haney, Jose Delbo and Pablo Marcos; and Balloon Buster featuring Enemy Ace in "Debt of Blood" by Robert Kanigher and Dan Spiegle. Joe Kubert did the cover. [2/25]



WORLD'S FINEST COMICS No. 279, May. Superman and Batman star in "Kidnapped" by Cary Burkett, Keith Pollard and Mike DeCarlo. Captain Marvel appears in "When Bancroft Fisher Dies, Everybody Dies" by Nelson Bridwell, Don Newton and Frank Chiaramonte. Hawkman stars in "Pirates of the Spaceways" by Bob Rozakis, Alex Saviuk and Rodin Rodriguez. And Green Arrow is featured in "The Hidden Soul of Harmony" by Joey Cavalieri, Trevor Von Eeden and Larry Mahlstedt. Ross Andru and Romeo Tanghal did the cover. [2/25]

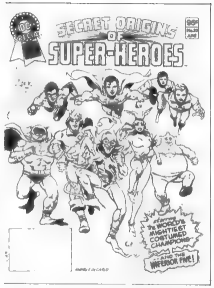
ARAK/SON OF THUNDER No. 10, June. "The Last Centaur" is by Roy Thomas, Gene Colan and Alfredo Alcala. The search for Malagigi continues. The Viking Prince stars in "A Frozen Hell For a Viking Prince, Part Three" by Robert Kanigher and Jan Duursema. Colon did the cover. [3/4]



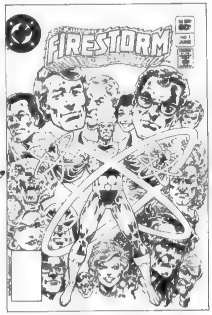
THE BEST OF DC No. 25, June. The theme is "Superman and his Favorite Kids" and the reprints include: "The TV Show That Menaced Metropolis" by Cary Bates, Curt Swan and Murphy Anderson (ACTION COMICS #422); "The Girl Who Didn't Believe in Superman" by Wayne Boring and Stan Kaye (SUPERMAN #96); "World Beneath the North Pole" by Elliot Maggin, Swan and Anderson (SUPERMAN #267); "Superman, You're Not Clark Kent -- And I Can Prove It" by Gerry Conway, Swan and Blaisdell (ACTION #457); "The Story of Superman, Junior" by Boring and Kaye (ACTION #232); and "Superman's Command Performance" by Bates, Swan and Frank Chiaramonte. Ross Andru and Frank Giacoia did the cover. [3/4]

DC COMICS PRESENTS No. 46, June. "The Wizard Who Wouldn't Stay Dead" is by E. Nelson Bridwell, Alex Saviuk and Pablo Marcos. Superman teams up with seven members of the international crime-fighting agregation called the Global Guardians: the Seraph, Green Fury, Rising Sun, Little Mermaid, the Olympian and Jack O'Lantern (But that's only six, you say? That's all the cover shows.) Ross Andru and Frank Giacoia did the cover. [3/4]

DC SPECIAL BLUE-RIBBON DIGEST No. 22, June. Another collection of Secret Origins of Super-Heroes, includ-



ing: "I Was the Man With Animal Powers" by France Herron, Carmine Infantino and Bob Stuart (origin of Animal Man) from STRANGE ADVENTURES #180; "S.O.S. Green Lantern" and "Secret of the Flaming Spears" by John Broome, Gil Kane and Joe Giella, both from SHOWCASE #22; "Target -- 21 Legionnaires" by Jim Shooter and George Papp (origin of Sun Boy) from ADVENTURE #348; "The Coming of the Costumed Incompetents" by E. Nelson Bridwell, Joe Orlando and Mike Esposito (the Inferior Five) from SHOWCASE #62; and "Black Lightning" by Tony Isabella, Trevor Von Eeden and Frank Springer from BLACK LIGHTNING #1. Ross Andru and Mike DeCarlo did the cover. [3/4]

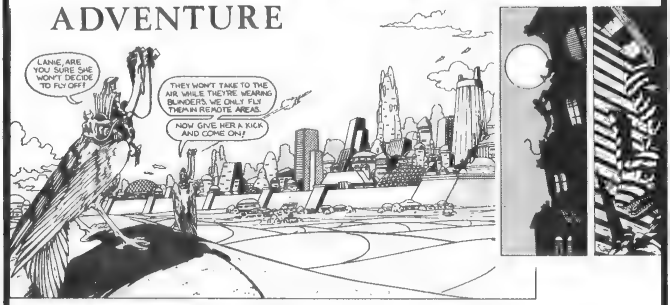


THE FURY OF FIRESTORM No. 1, June. "The Day of the Bison" is by Gerry Conway, Pat Broderick and Rodin Rodriguez. An American history teacher's body is taken over by the spirit of his dead grandfather, a former Indian shaman -- which results in the militant Indian champion called the Black Bison. Broderick and Dick Giordano did the cover. [3/4]

FIND WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR IN

VISIONS

ADVENTURE


LANIE, ARE YOU SURE SHE WON'T DECIDE TO FLY OFF?
THEY WON'T TAKE TO THE AIR WHILE THEY'RE WEARING BLINDERS. WE ONLY FLY THEM IN REMOTE AREAS.
NOW GIVE HER A KICK AND COME ON!

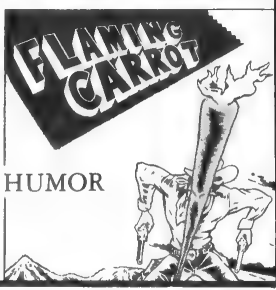
ROMANCE

YOU MUST ADMIT YOU'VE BEEN SOMETHING LESS THAN A GOOD LUCK CHARM. I'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO ABUL-SARA TO GET MORE PYRONS FROM DAD AND I THINK I'D BE SAFER GOING SOLO.
DON'T YOU THINK THE LIGHTRUNNER'S REGISTRATION WAS TRACED AFTER THAT RUN-IN ABOVE EVON-1? YOUR SHIP MUST BE HOTTER THAN HELL!
DAMN! MAYBE I'M JUST A SUCKER FOR A NICE ASS.
LET'S HEAD FOR THE SHUTTLE!

DRAMA

FLAMING CARROT

HUMOR



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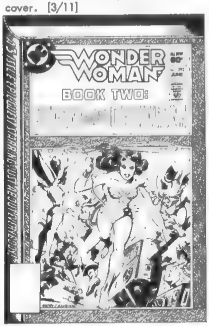
JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA No. 203, June. "Shuffle and Deal With Death" is by Gerry Conway, Don Heck and Brett Breeding. An all-new Royal Flush Gang entraps the JLA. George Perez and Dick Giordano did the cover. [3/4]

WEIRD WAR TALES No. 112, June. "Medusa Sting" is by Robert Kanigher and Dan Spiegle. The new member of the Creature Commandos is a new version of Medusa. The G.I. Robot stars in the back-up, "The Robot and the Samurai" by Kanigher and Fred Carrillo. Ross Andru and Romeo Tanghal did the cover. [3/4]

WONDER WOMAN No. 292, June. "Weighed...Measured...And Found Wanting" is by Paul Levitz, Roy Thomas, Gene Colan and Frank McLaughlin. Part two of the mini-series features guest-appearances by Lois Lane, the Huntress, Black Canary, Supergirl, Power Girl and Madame Xanadu. Ross Andru and Dick Giordano did the cover. [3/4]

BATMAN No. 348, June. "Shadow Play" is by Gerry Conway, Gene Colan and Klaus Janson. Bruce, Dick and Alfred move back to Wayne Manor and they try to find a cure for the Man-Bat. Plus, Catwoman in "The Man...the Bullet...the Cat" by Bruce Jones, Trevor Von Eeden and Pablo Marcos. Jim Aparo did the cover. [3/11]

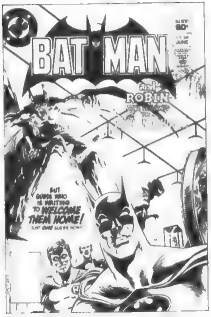


THE FLASH No. 310, June. "Colonel Computron Strikes Back...With a Vengeance" is by Cary Bates, Carmine Infantino and Dennis Jensen. And "American Gothic" features Dr. Fate in Iowa in a story by Steve Gerber, Martin Pasko, Keith Giffen and Larry Mahlstedt. Giffen and Romeo Tanghal did the cover. [3/11]

G.I. COMBAT No. 242, June. "The Last Mail Call" and "The Psycho Soldiers" by Robert Kanigher, Sam Glanzman and Dick Ayers, both of which feature the Haunted Tank. Other stories include "Five Nails From Freedom" by David Allikas and Ernie Patricio; "Promise For a Dead Pilot" by Evan Douglas and Jerry Grandenetti; and the Mercenaries in "Three Guns For Hire" by Kanigher and Vic Catan. Joe Kubert did the cover. [3/11]

JONAH HEX No. 61, June. "In the Belly of the Malay Tiger" is by Michael Fleisher, Dick Ayers and Tony DeZuniga. The search for Mei Ling leads to the Orient for Jonah. A rare book-lengther. Ross Andru and Dick Giordano did the cover. [3/11]

THE NEW TEEN TITANS No. 20, June. "Dear Mom and Dad" is by Marv Wolfman, George Perez and Romeo Tanghal. Wally West tells a story of the Titans vs. the Disruptor. Plus, a story which features the kidnapping of Marv Wolfman and George Perez by a mad scientist, "A Titanic Tale of Titan Tomfoolery" by the kidnap victims. Perez did the cover. [3/11]



SAGA OF THE SWAMP THING No. 2, June. "Something to Live For" is by Martin Pasko and Tom Yeates. The muck-monster befriends a woman believed to be a witch. Then, the Phantom Stranger helps a fireman who died in the line of duty in "Soul on Fire" by Mike W. Barr and Dan Spiegle. The cover is a photo from the upcoming SWAMP THING movie. [3/11]

SUPERMAN No. 372, June. "Superman's History-Changing Mission" is by Cary Bates, Curt Swan and Frank Chiaramonte. Impossible or not, Superman tries to go back in time and change the course of history for a good reason. Then, Superman 2021 appears in "Kidnappers in the Sky" by Bob Rozakis and Gil Kane. Ross Andru and Dick Giordano did the cover. [3/11]

THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD No. 187, June. "Whatever Happened to What's

'Er Name?" is by Charlie Boatner and Jim Aparo. Batman teams up with the female members (?) of the Metal Men. Then, Nemesis appears in "Arena of Despair" by Cary Burkett and Dan Spiegle. Aparo did the cover. [3/18]

GREEN LANTERN No. 153, June. "Secret of the Star-Cycle" is by Marv Wolfman, Dan Mishkin, Gary Cohn, Joe Staton and Mike DeCarlo. The adventures in outer space continue. Tales of the Green Lantern Corps is represented with "The Choice" by Paul Kupperberg and Carmine Infantino. Ernie Colon and Steve Mitchell did the cover. [3/18]

HOUSE OF MYSTERY No. 305, June. The I, VAMPIRE story is "Blood and Sand" by Bruce Jones and Ernie Colon. The other stories are "Through a Lens Darkly" by Klein, Manna and Sam Grainger. and "Jenny, Are You There?" by Jones and Noly Zamora. Michael Kaluta did the cover. [3/18]

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THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES No. 288, June. "The Legionnaire's Made For Burning" is by Paul Levitz, Keith Giffen and Bruce Patterson. At the center of political intrigue are Karate Kid and Princess Projectra. Giffen and Romeo Tanghal did the cover. [3/18]

SGT. ROCK No. 365, June. "Jigsaw" is by Robert Kanigher and Frank Redondo. The non-Rock stories are "The Ultimate Weapon" by Jack Harris and Tom Mandrake as well as a couple of Battle Albums by Kim DeMulder. Joe Kubert did the cover. [3/18]

THE SUPERMAN FAMILY No. 219, June. "Prison Bars Do Not a Cell Make" is the Supergirl story by Paul Kupperberg, Win Mortimer and Vince Colletta, featuring the Master Jailer as the villain. Mr. and Mrs. Superman star in "Paper Tiger" by Nelson Bridwell, Kurt Schaffenberger and Dan Adkins; "We Lois Lanes Have to Stick Together" is by Tamsyn O'Flynn, Bob Oksner and Vince Colletta; and "Jimmy Olsen of the Eagle" is by Paul Kupperberg, Jose Delbo and Joe Giella. Ross Andru and Frank Giacoia did the cover. [3/18]

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THE WARLORD No. 58, June. "Royal Flush" is by Mike Grell, Mark Texiera and Mike DeCarlo. A bogus Travis sits on the throne in Skartaris and people are beginning to wonder about it. Plus, Arion stars in "Darkworld" by Paul Kupperberg and Jan Duursema. Grell did the cover. [3/18]

ACTION COMICS No. 532, June. "H.I.V.E. and Seek" is by Marv Wolfman, Curt Swan and Dave Hunt. Lois Lane goes undercover to get the goods on H.I.V.E. The Atom is the backup in "Carnival of Catastrophe" by Bob Rozakis, Alex Saviuk and Vince Colletta. Ross Andru and Dick Giordano did the cover. [3/25]

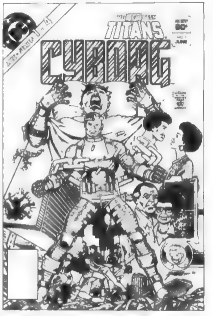
ALL-STAR SQUADRON No. 10, June. "If An Eye Offend Thee" is by Roy Thomas, Adrian Gonzales and Jerry Ordway. Invaders from space stop the war, and all heroes with metal in them, as Robotman and Steel are immobilized. Joe Kubert did the cover. [3/25]

CAPTAIN CARROT AND HIS AMAZING ZOO CREW No. 4, June. "His Name Is...Mudd" is by Roy Thomas, Scott Shaw and Bob Smith. Mudd, need we say, is the new super-baddie. Shaw and Smith did the cover. [3/25]

DETECTIVE COMICS No. 515, June. "College For Killers" is by Gerry Conway, Don Newton and Frank Chiaramonte. Batman teams up with Christopher Chance, the Human Target. Also Batgirl stars in "In the Coils of the Serpent" by Cary Burkett, Jose Delbo and Joe Giella. Jim Aparo did the cover. [3/25]

THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY No. 30, June. "Secret of the Crystal Curse" is by Cary Bates, Kurt Schaffenberger and Dave Hunt. The DIAL "H" FOR HERO story is "The Disc Jockey's Final Fling" by Nelson Bridwell, Bob Rozakis, Howard Bender and Joe Giella. Schaffenberger did the cover. [3/25]

TALES OF THE NEW TEEN TITANS No. 1, June. "Cyborg" is by Marv Wolfman, George Perez and Brett Breeding. The four-part mini series featuring solo stories of the Titans begins with a book-length Cyborg adventure. Perez did the cover. [3/25]



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UNKNOWN SOLDIER No. 264, June. "Hell is a Cold Place" is by Bob Haney, Dick Ayers and Gerry Talaoc. The Unknown Solider must retrieve a valued Allied weapon. The Balloon Buster then appears in "A Coffin For Aces" by Robert Kanigher and Dan Spiegle, while Tomahawk stars in "George Washington Slept Died Here" by Haney, Jose Delbo and Andy Mushynsky. Joe Kubert did the cover. [3/25]

WORLD'S FINEST COMICS No. 280, June. "General Scarr's Army of Crime" is by Cary Burkett, Rich Buckler and Frank Giacoia. Superman and Batman take on a new foe. Captain Marvel Jr. stars in "The Secret of the Freeman Brothers" by Nelson Bridwell, Don Newton and Frank Chiaramonte; Green Arrow appears in "Harmony and Discord" by Joey Cavalieri, Trevor Von Eeden and Larry Mahlstedt; and Hawkman is featured in "Now You Czemm ...Now You Don't" by Bob Rozakis, Alex Saviuk and Rodin Rodriguez. Buckler and Giacoia did the cover. [3/25]

SUPERMAN by Siegel & Shuster

—AND BECAUSE YOU'RE MY DEAREST FRIEND, I JUST COULDN'T THINK OF MARRYING "SUPIE" WITHOUT YOUR BEING BEST MAN.
FOR PETE'S SAKE—WILL YOU STOP CALLING HIM "SUPIE"?
WHY, CLARK—WHAT A WAY TO ACT, AFTER ALL, HE IS MY FIANCE, AND "SUPERMAN" SOUNDS SO FORMAL UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES.
IT GETS ON MY NERVES! IT SOUNDS IDIOTIC,
—AND, AS FOR BEING BEST MAN—EMPHATICALLY NO!!
EDITORIAL
UH-HUH.
AND SHE SAID SHE'D MARRY SUPERMAN ONLY IF CLARK AGREED TO BE BEST MAN. WHAT'LL SHE DO NOW?

CLARK, MY HAPPINESS WON'T BE COMPLETE UNLESS YOU CONSENT TO BE BEST MAN AT MY WEDDING TO SUPERMAN.
NOT A CHANCE!
SO HE REFUSES TO BE BEST MAN, SO WHAT?
LET HIM GO! YOU DON'T OWE THAT GUY ANYTHING, LOIS.
HM— IF I CAN'T PERSUADE HIM, MAYBE SUPERMAN CAN.
CLARK AND SUPERMAN WOULD HAVE TO APPEAR TOGETHER AT ALL THE FUNCTIONS — THE WEDDING REHEARSALS — WHEW! WHAT A SPOT TO BE IN! SOMETHING HAS TO BE DONE!

I JUST WON'T FEEL RIGHT WITHOUT CLARK KENT AS BEST MAN. IF I CAN'T PERSUADE HIM, THEN IT'S UP TO YOU.
AND IF I CAN'T, DOES THAT MEAN YOU WON'T MARRY ME?
OF COURSE NOT, DARLING. BUT IF WE POSTPONE THE WEDDING A BIT, CLARK'LL SURELY GET OVER HIS JEALOUSY AND CONSENT.
NO, I REFUSE! I AIN'T RUNNING OUR LIVES! THE WEDDING GOES ON AS SCHEDULED!
SO...THEY "COMPROMISED"...
"DAILY PLANET"
SUPERMAN POSTPONES WEDDING, LOIS AGREES
SO CLARK KENT IS HOLDING UP THE WEDDING, WELL—HE WON'T GET AWAY WITH IT! MY BOYS ARE EXPERTS IN THE ART OF PERSUASION!

SEEKING TIME TO PERSUADE CLARK KENT TO BE BEST MAN, LOIS HAS INDUCED SUPERMAN TO POSTPONE THEIR WEDDING. BUT THE DELAY BRINGS A CERTAIN UNSAVORY CHARACTER NAMED GAUNT...
WITH SUPERMAN MARRIED, WE COULD KEEP HIM SO BUSY PROTECTING HIS WIFE THAT HE'D HAVE NO TIME TO INTERFERE WITH OUR ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES.
SO YOU WANT KENT BROUGHT IN FOR A LITTLE "TALK," EH, GAUNT?
AND ELSEWHERE...
...AND BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE AMALGAMATED WOMEN'S CLUBS OF METROPOLIS UNANIMOUSLY ENDORSE THE PUBLIC PROTEST PARADE AGAINST CLARK KENT FOR HIS INTERFERENCE WITH TRUE ROMANCE.
HEAR!
TWELVE MORE CANCELLATIONS ON ORDERS FOR LOIS LANE SWEATERS BECAUSE OF THAT WEDDING POSTPONEMENT! SOMETHING'S GOT TO BE DONE.
YOU'RE RIGHT, J.G. WE'VE GOT TO PUT THE PRESSURE ON THIS FELLOW KENT.

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The Menomonee Falls Gazette

—AND HERE'S ONE FROM THE METROPOLIS HOTEL ASSOCIATION.—THE DELAY IN THE WEDDING BECAUSE OF YOUR UNWARRANTED REFUSAL TO BE BEST MAN HAS RESULTED IN A WAVE OF CANCELED RESERVATIONS OWING TO—"
—AND WE THINK YOU ARE A COLD, UNROMANTIC HEEL, WITH A HEART OF STONE, A TWISTED SOUL, AND A WARPED MIND. SINCERELY YOURS, SEVENTEEN ENLISTED MEN OF THE U.S. ARMY." HOLY SMOKE! EVEN THE ARMED FORCES ARE SORE AT ME.
"—THIS MARRIAGE IS GETTING COMPLICATED. I'M IN A NICE PICKLE. IF IT WERE ONLY POSSIBLE TO BE SUPERMAN AND KENT AT THE SAME TIME, I COULD BE BEST MAN AND RELAX—"
JUST KEEP WALKING, KENT. THERE'S A CAB WAITING AROUND THE CORNER.
HUH?!

WHAT'S THE IDEA?
JUST GET IN AND SHUT UP!
("BEST THING TO DO IS GO ALONG AND SEE WHAT THEIR GAME IS.—")
HE DON'T LOOK LIKE NOTHIN' FOR ANY DAME TO MAKE A FUSS OVER, DOES HE?
WELL—LIKE GAUNT SAYS, DAMES ARE STUPID.
SPECIAL DELIVERY, GAUNT.
OOPS—WHEN MY PAL SUPERMAN, GETS WIND OF THIS, YOU'RE GOING TO REGRET IT.
SUPERMAN?
WHY, MY DEAR FELLOW, WE'RE ACTING ENTIRELY IN SUPERMAN'S INTEREST. WHEN WE FINISH WITH YOU, HE'S GOING TO OWE US A DEBT OF THANKS!!

IT'S ENTIRELY FOR SUPERMAN'S SAKE THAT I WANTED TO SEE YOU, MY STUBBORN FRIEND. YOU'RE STANDING IN THE WAY OF HIS MARRIAGE BY REFUSING TO BE BEST MAN.
BUT HOW'S THAT POSSIBLE?
I'M A CIVIC-MINDED MAN, AND YOUR ATTITUDE VIOLATES PUBLIC SENTIMENT, INJURES BUSINESS AND CONSTITUTES PLAIN OBSTRUCTIONISM. WILL YOU OR WILL YOU NOT CHANGE YOUR MIND?
("—I CAN'T REVEAL MYSELF AS SUPERMAN AND I WON'T MAKE A PROMISE I CAN'T KEEP! WHAT'LL I DO?—")
WELL?
HOLY SMOKE! TAKE A LOOK OUT THERE!!

WHY—IT'S FOR ME!
DAMES—A PARADE OF DAMES!
SO—WE'RE NOT ALONE IN OUR DISAPPROVAL OF YOUR UNWILLINGNESS TO BE BEST MAN AT SUPERMAN'S WEDDING TO LOIS LANE.
CLARK WANT IN THE SWIRL OF ROMANCE!
PANT, LET KENT INTERFERE WITH MY LOVE!
CLARK KENT—RELENT! LET THE BELLS RING FOR SUPERMAN AND LOIS!
KENT, YOU'RE A HEEL.
I—I AM??

Cel Break

By Jim Korkis

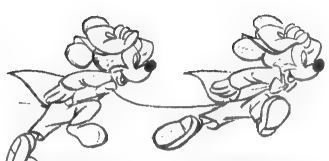
NEW ANIMATION BOOK. Jerry Beck and Will Friedwald are putting together another cartoon index book for Scarecrow Press. This time it will cover the M-G-M cartoons. Beck is especially excited about it because this time he's been given a year deadline and will have more control over the finished product. (THE WARNER BROTHERS CARTOONS was a bit rushed in terms of time and control.) Also, this book will contain stills.

BARRIER'S BOOK. From a reliable source, I've been informed that Mike Barrier's long-promised book on Warner cartoons will be coming out reasonably soon. Warners has gotten another publisher to split the publishing costs with them but the new "co-producer" wants certain changes.

DAREDEVIL COMES TO SATURDAY MORNING. Once upon a time, Ruby-Spears did some advance testing for three possible series it was considering: Spider-Man, Daredevil and Thundarr. It's obvious which one came out on top. This year Spider-Man has made his mark on Saturday morning. Next year, Marvel Animation will present the adventures of Daredevil. Mark Evanier has been signed to write the pilot script.

FAREWELL TO SNIDELY WHIPLASH. Hans Conried died of a heart ailment January 5th. He was sixty-four years old. Although the news reports emphasized that he was best known for his appearances on the DANNY THOMAS SHOW, probably more people remember him as the voice of Snidely Whiplash in the DUDLEY DO-RIGHT cartoons or as Captain Hook in the Disney version of PETER PAN, or as Waldo Wigglesworth on HOPPITY HOOPER, or as the host of Jay Ward's FRACTURED FLICKERS series, or as one of the countless other voices that he contributed to animated cartoons.

NEW FILMATION PROJECTS. Filmation plans to release one feature-length animated film a year. The films, budgeted at two to six million dollars will supposedly be "fuller" than the typically minimal robot-like movements of their Saturday morning shows. Lou Scheimer, an executive at Filmation, stated that "Disney has a primo reputation based on full animation but less animation doesn't mean bad animation. You just have to be more creative." Filmation plans a new version of GULLIVER'S TRAVELS (with a special gimmick Scheimer will not disclose at this time) as well as a sequel to the JOUR-



NEY BACK TO OZ movie it made several years ago (which may result in some trouble because Disney has owned the rights to all the Baum books for the past thirty years and is presently working on a live-action project tentatively titled RETURN TO OZ) and a full-length ZORRO feature.

ANIMATED LUCKY LUKE ADVENTURES. Gaumont TV is sponsoring a co-production package with Hanna-Barbera and a number of public and private companies in Europe to bring in fifty-two half-hour episodes of LUCKY LUKE, the popular Western parody comic character done by Goscinny and Morris. Production is supposed to start early this year so that the first group of cartoons could start appearing by September.

ANNIE AWARDS. Longtime Chuck Jones-associate Ken Harris was hospitalized and was unable to attend the Tenth Annual Annie Awards of the International Animated Film Society held late last year. Unfortunately, Chuck Jones was similarly indisposed so he couldn't present the society's top honor, the Winsor McCay Trophy to Harris. Jones's daughter Linda did read a message from her father extolling Harris as an invaluable "right arm." Richard Williams presented the award to Harris's wife Catherine and the entire evening's ceremonies were videotaped so Harris could view them from his sickbed.

NICE GUY AWARD. William Hanna of Hanna-Barbera fame made a significant donation to the St. Joseph Medical Center in Burbank so they could expand their stress-testing facilities.

YOUNG FILMMAKER AWARDS. An April 1, 1982 deadline has been set for entries in the fourth annual Los Angeles Junior Student Film Festival which is open to budding filmmakers in kindergarten through ninth grade. The festival award ceremony will be held May 13 at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in Beverly Hills. Both live action and animation films will be judged. The judges for the animation? Ralph Bakshi, Chuck Jones and Walter Lantz. It's a group of judges whose personal philosophies of animation certainly cover a broad spectrum.

MORE ON THE MOUSE. Walt Disney and Group W Satellite Communications have earmarked $100 million to produce programs for the planned Disney Channel pay-TV network. Disney will not be renewing its contracts with other pay-TV networks after July, which means that Disney films now seen on Home Box Office, ON-TV or other pay services will no longer be available. It's also been hinted that with the advent of this new outlet for Disney programs that Disney may also cease to produce the Disney show now seen on CBS Saturday nights.

APATOONS. The animation apa, APATOONS, is now four issues old. Members include Jerry Beck, Mark Kausler, David Mruz, Marcus Wielage, Fred Patten, myself, and many, many others. Those names should be familiar to most animation fans but don't be intimidated. The roster also includes many members who simply love cartoons and are there to learn more about 'em. There is still room for anyone wanting to join. Send an s.a.s.e. to Dan Markstein and GiGi Done, 3433 W. Sierra Vista, Phoenix, AZ 85017 for further information.

COMING ATTRACTIONS. This is a big year for animated films. Don Bluth Productions will unveil THE SECRET OF NIMH. Film maker John Korty will present a "dramatic new style of animation" when his TWICE UPON A TIME comes to theaters during Christmas from the Ladd Co. Marble Arch will have the animated version of Peter Beagle's fantasy THE LAST UNICORN ready by Spring. (It'll be released by Universal.) Avco Embassy will release Martin (WATERSHIP DOWN) Rosen's THE PLAGUE DOGS. Disney is planning reissues of ROBIN HOOD, BAMBI and FANTASIA with a new score. (And don't forget the MICKEY'S CHRISTMAS CAROL short due for Christmas of 1982.) Jim Henson of the Muppets will also have a new movie ready by May. It's more

fantasy than animation and it's entitled THE DARK CRYSTAL.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW? Jesse Santos, former artist on DAGAR and DR. SPEKTOR, is currently working for Filmation Studios. He did a lot of the designs on the ZORRO and BLACK STAR series.

DON'T FORGET. If you have any animation news, rumors or good cheer, write it down and send it to Jim Korkis, 707 West Doran, Glendale, CA 91203.

TCR Mailboat

STEVE SKEATES, Alfred, NY: "Hey, what the--!" my wounded ego suddenly said, once I started reading Lou Mougin's article on Tower Comics in your December issue. And, unaccustomed as I am to placating this publicity-hungry intrinsic entity, I do feel that this time around the old complainer did have a few legitimate complaints. Not that he had any right to object to my name being left out of the list of Tower scripters; after all, that was only a partial list, and Mr. Mougin quite clearly pointed that out. What did hank my ego off, though, was seeing Gil Kane credited with two of my UNDERSEA AGENT scripts which had flowed out of mine own typewriter--"The Will Warp" in #3 and "To Save a Monster" in #4. (For the record, if anyone's interested, I also scripted for those selfsame issues "To Save a King," "At the Mercy of Doctor Mayhem," "True or False," and "Bait-Can Caper," plus the Undersea story that appeared in THUNDER AGENTS #13.)

I hasten to point out that I'm well aware (who isn't?) that none of these scripts were great; in fact, one is hard-pressed to even call them good. But, back then, I was a green kid who was just beginning to learn his craft (one need only look back at the THUNDER SQUAD story in TA #4 to see just how green I was; that many words per panel, yet I didn't even explain how it was Lightning survived being shot at point-blank range).

I joined the Tower squad of free-lancers while work on TA #4 was just beginning and was more than a little instrumental in the creation of Lightning (as Mr. Mougin pointed out, a more-or-less blantant rip-off, but what the hell?). From then on, I scripted all but two of the Lightning stories (--the ones I missed were in issues 9 and 10 which was when I was suffering through the first of my many mind-wracking writer's blocks). I still have a certain amount of affection for the slightly off-the-wall villains I created for this series--the Warp Wizard, Mock-Man, Dr. Forkliff, et al.

I also wrote the first RAVEN story, the THUNDER AGENTS stories in 5 and 12, the NoMAN stories in #4,6,11,14 plus "Trapped in the Past" and "A Quick Change of Mind" in the NoMAN book. I never worked on the DYNAMO book nor FIGHT THE ENEMY, but (believe it or not) I did write a couple of TIPPY TEEN stories.

ROY THOMAS, Los Angeles: Thanks for your unexpected but welcome defense of ALL-STAR SQUADRON...not that, with current sales, it or the other books I write need a lot of defending, praise the Lord.

Still, I'd like to use reader Schulz's diatribe against various professional efforts, mine only one among them, as a springboard, if I may, to put down in writing for TCR readers what I've been saying for the past year and more at various comics conventions when they ask why, given the choice by DC, I write the comics I do and not others which they might like better.

It all boils down, really, to the question of whether I'm in business as a professional to (a) pander to the tastes of others; or (b) to write what I want to write.

Now, obviously, comics is a popular art form. Thus, it behooves me to try to sell six figures' worth of comics each issue. Now that the royalty plans are in effect, I have added incentive to make those books sell as well as possible--for my own economic sake, for DC's, and for that of my artistic collaborators.

However, past that point--and certainly at the time when ALL-STAR SQUADRON, ARAK, and even CAPTAIN CARROT were created for DC--I write (a) what I WANT to write, and (b) what DC will LET me write. The tension between those two points is endless, ever-shifting. If a book's sales fall, obviously I won't keep the freedom I now enjoy to write what I want to write. But luckily for me, as long as those books DO sell, I'm free to ignore reader Schulz's ill-founded comments on my "inability to understand that World War II is about as relevant to most readers as the Crimean War."

There's an arrogant point in the above quote from TCR #198's letter from reader Schulz, though I sincerely doubt if he's followed it through to its logical, all but inescapable conclusion.

Schulz is saying, in effect, "I decide what's 'relevant.'" (Hated word; sorry he used it, but he's got a right.) If he decides that "we" (his word again) are all "really tired of Evil Nazis," he is assuming he can sit there in Flagstaff, Arizona, somehow in tune with the comics fandom either, and decide what "we" all really want. Even beyond the fact that RAIDERS' success proves that "we" aren't tired of anything of the sort, but that only individual readers are--and how MANY individual readers are, I suspect, depends on the handling. Lucas and Spielberg proved that movie-goers would respond to a certain kind of story, even set in the non-relevant thirties; they were right. I had a hunch the comics readers might respond to a super-hero group series set in World War Two; to date, on my own small limited scale, I too have been shown right.

Fans amuse me, in a perverse sort of way...at least certain fans do. They spend reams of paper which might otherwise be better spent, telling me and other professionals that we are hopeless hacks who never do anything new (see Schulz's comments on my INVADERS or Byrne's treatment of the Frankie Raye character I created some years back). Yet, when we try a new approach to something like THE INVADERS which, after all, lasted forty issues and came close to surviving, they castigate us for THAT. It ought to be clear to reader Schulz that ALL-STAR SQUADRON is not an "imitation" of THE INVADERS in the sense he means the word, because I am the writer/creator of both series. Rather, ALL-STAR SQUADRON is the continuation of both a thematic approach and a historical tack which I took first in THE INVADERS, and have been interested in honing in a new book at DC.

Reader Schulz may well not LIKE the fact that I want to do a comic book set in World War Two, and that's his right. He certainly doesn't have to buy it...and if enough people don't buy it, the book will be discontinued and I'll have to do something else, something I DON'T want to do nearly as much. This is improvement?

What the Schulzes of this world are saying, whether they are bright enough to realize it or not, is that we who write and draw comics--rather than following our own lights--should try to figure out exactly what THEY want, and pander to THEM. Because that's just what I WOULD be doing if I wrote what reader Schulz wants to see, isn't it? I would then actually BE a hack, writing what I figured would sell, without regard to what I really want to write. I can do that--have done it, from time to time, as most pros do if they try to stay in the business long enough--but I prefer my own way to reader Schulz's.

And make no mistake--for Frank Miller to write and draw DAREDEVIL as he does is a good thing...for him. For me to write the same kind of stories would be pandering, because though I don't mind at all reading DAREDEVIL, I don't WANT to write like that, for the most part. I want to write about other worlds, other historical epochs, other approaches to super-heroes (ARAK, CAPTAIN CARROT, ALL-STAR)...and I resent a reader like Schulz castigating me because what I write isn't "relevant" to him. I wasn't trying to be "relevant," except in the sense that a story set in

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☐ THE SPIRIT #32

February

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☐ THE BEST OF DC #24 (Legion of Super-Heroes)
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CAPTAIN KENTUCKY ...FOR MAYOR?!
HOKEY SMOKES! I DON'T WANNA BE MAYOR, EVEN IF THE PEOPLE OF LOUISVILLE ARE DEMANDING IT!
AND THIS CONCLUDES OUR LIVE INTERVIEW WITH MAYORAL CANDIDATES GEORGE CLARK AND HARVEY SLOANE!
Episode 108:
CAPTAIN KENTUCKY
RIPES! THIS LIVE BROADCAST-- I'VE GOT TO GET OVER TO THAT TV STUDIO WHILE IT'S STILL ON!
WE NOW RETURN TO OUR REGULARLY SCHEDULED
PROGRA--?
WHAT THE--?
WAITAMINIT! YOU CAN'T DO THIS! I AM NOT RUNNING FOR MAYOR OF LOUISVILLE!
TOO!
MR. SLOANE! MR. CLARK! PLEASE! TELL THESE PEOPLE I REALLY DON'T WANT TO BE MAYOR! I'M HAPPY BEING JUST A FREELANCE SUPER HERO? I REALLY AM! I AGREE WITH YOU--SURE! IT'S UNFAIR FOR A PUBLIC IDOL TO RUN AGAINST POLITICIANS IN ANYTHING YOU SAY!
NO! NO! THIS TEARS IT! YES? HE OBVIOUSLY KNOWS WHAT A SHREWD POLITICAL MANUEVER IT IS TO DENY BEING A CANDIDATE. HE KNOWS THE HARD-TO-GET ATTITUDE MAKES HIM ALL THE MORE POPULAR TO THE VOTERS!
HARRY JAMES & HIS BAND WERE IN TOWN RECENTLY, BOY, THAT'S REAL MUSIC! GIVE ME BENNY GOODMAN, GLENN MILLER, TOMMY DORSEY, etc.! NOTHIN' IN THE LAST ½ CENTURY COMPARES TO GOODMAN'S "SING, SING, SING!"
AND HOW NICE OF HIM TO PUBLICLY AGREE THAT IT'S "UNFAIR" COMPETITION FOR US TO EVEN TRY TO RUN AGAINST HIM! WHAT BRILLIANT REVERSE PSYCHOLOGY! I'D RATHER HE JUST SHUT UP!
YEAH! IF I HAD MY DRUTHERS, I'D... SAY, IN POINT OF FACT, I DO HAVE MY DRUTHERS, DON'T I?
FOUL! FOUL? NOW YOU'RE STARTING IN! COMMERCIAL PLUG! FOUL! I WASN'T GOING TO DO THIS, CLARK, BUT YOU'VE FORCED MY HAND...
I HAVE CANDID PHOTOGRAPHS HERE OF GEORGE CLARK AND QUEENIE BEE ENGAGING IN UNNATUR--
GIMME THOSE, YOU!
THUD!
NO, WAIT! LISTEN TO ME! YOU'VE GOT TO LISTEN TO ME?
PEOPLE OF LOUISVILLE! ELECT ME AS MAYOR, AND I PROMISE YOU I'LL PROBABLY BE AS BAD A NATIONAL DISGRACE AS OL WHATZISFACE?
OOPS!
SOK!
CRASH!
POW!
WE LOST THE CAMERA, BOSS? WHAT D' I LOOK LIKE ON SCREEN?
WE LOST THE TRANSMISSION RIGHT AFTER CAPTAIN KENTUCKY SAID "ELECT ME MAYOR"!
SWELL.
NEXT WEEK: ELECTION DAY!!!

CAPTAIN KENTUCKY
FOR MAYOR
EPIZODE 109
©1981 DON ROSA
K.B.R. STAFF
IT'S TIME WE HAD A MAYOR WHO CAN HURDLE SKYSCAPERS IN A SINGLE BOUND, CHANGE THE COURSE OF MIGHTY RIVERS, LOWER TAXES AND BEND STEEL IN HIS BARE HANDS.
SO FAR NOTHING ELSE HAS CONVINCED THE POPULACE THAT I DON'T WANT TO BE MAYOR... BUT THIS WILL WORK FOR SURE!
OUR UNBIASED LIVE-T.V. DEBATE IS ABOUT TO BEGIN FEATURING MAYORAL CANDIDATES GEORGE CLARK, HARVEY SLINGUE, AND EVERYBODY'S HERO CAPTAIN KENTUCKY!
HOLD IT? WHO'S THIS GUY? HE ISN'T CAPTAIN WOTZISNAME?
RIGHT? DOESN'T THIS "C.K." CONSIDER THIS DEBATE WORTHY OF HIS ATTENTION??
ABSOLUTELY RIGHT! C.K. SENT ME TO TELL YOU THAT HE HAS BETTER THINGS TO DO!
WOTTA GUY! OF COURSE CAPTAIN KENTUCKY HAS BETTER THINGS TO DO? HE'S PROBABLY ON A MISSION TO PROTECT THE LIVES AND PROPERTY OF THE CITIZENS!
HOORAY FOR C.K.!!!
HE'S UNDOUBTEDLY RISKING HIS LIFE BATTLING SOME PUBLIC MENACE FULLY REALIZING HE MAY BE SACRIFICING HIS CHANCE TO BE MAYOR! WHAT COMMUNITY SPIRIT? HUZZAH!
C.K.'S PRE-RECORDED SPECIAL MESSAGE: YOUR VOTE COUNTS 100% AS MUCH AS THAT OF THE RICHEST OR MOST POWERFUL RESIDENT OF THE CITY! PROVE YOU'RE PROUD TO BE PART OF A DEMOCRACY: VOTE!
C.K. FOR MAYOR? HOORAY?
OH, BEANS! NOTHING GETS THROUGH TO THESE PEOPLE!
THIS CAPTAIN KENTUCKY'S I CAN'T COMPETE WITH HIS GENIUS OF MANIPULATING VOTER PSYCHOLOGY I'D BEST BOW OUT!
YES, AT ANY RATE, I NEED TO GET BUSY ON ALL MY BILLBOARDS AROUND TOWN AND PAINT A COMMA IN AFTER "LOUISVILLE" LEST PEOPLE THINK I DON'T KNOW BASIC GRADE-SCHOOL PUNCTUATION!
AND I NEED TO GET BACK TO WALKING AROUND TOWN MEETING TENS OF THOUSANDS OF LOUISVILLIANS!
WHY? HAVING SOME TROUBLE REMEMBERING ALL THE NAMES?
WADIYA' SAY TO THIS? HERE'S A HAMBURGER I JUST BOUGHT AT BURGER QUEEN...
DRUTHERS
WHATEVER! HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THIS??
GEORGE CLARK MAYOR
SHEER CHANCE ARRANGEMENT OF BITS OF CHOICE, LEAN, 100% BEEF, BROILED TO PERFECTION, AND—
THE SAME "SHEER CHANCE" THAT PRODUCES FRENCH FRIES THAT EACH SAY, "McCONNELL YARMUTH-HEYBURN"?
BATTLING THE NUKE DUKE & J.FRED FROG TOGETHER WOULD BE LESS FIERCE THAN THIS SORT OF IN-FIGHTING? NEXT WEEK IS ELECTION DAY AND I'M STILL LOSING THE FIGHT TO LOSE THE FIGHT!
SO I LIED... NEXT WEEK'S ELECTION DAY!

ANY period can be interesting and perhaps instructive in a certain way.

When I start trying to write like someone else, about someone else's idea of a relevant theme--be it teen-age super-heroes in the 1980s (which was okay for me in the '70s, but no longer interests me) or whatever--THAT'S when I'll really deserve censure.

By the way, Adrian Gonzales was chosen by Len Wein, and I had no part in the matter,so I'm not in a position here of defending a choice I made. (In fact, I had the same reservations about it you do, because Adrian's background is different from even a YOUNG American.) However, Len made what is basically a GOOD choice, I think, for several reasons.

First Adrian is a good artist, who was just beginning to get the feel of things...and with Jerry Ordway's (another Len Wein choice which worked out happily) continued inking on most issues, we should be in good shape.

Secondly, and most importantly, it is very hard to get an artist to do a group book. That may change now that royalties are being paid, with people noticing that THE NEW TEEN TITANS and ALL-STAR SQUADRON are two of the best-selling DC comics, and of course, we all know about X-MEN's success...but most artists (pencillers in particular) would rather not deal with a comic which handles a half dozen super-heroes, let alone the dozens which potentially could appear in a magazine like ALL-STAR SQUADRON or LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES. Adrian was one of the relatively few artists available at the time ...and I think that DC (and particularly I, since ALL-STAR is my own pet project) was damn lucky to have him do it!

It's funny, too. At Marvel, Frank Robbins was in many ways the IDEAL choice to do THE INVADERS a few years back. He was a talented artist, if a bit cartoony...knew the World War II period well because he was old enough to have remembered it...and he had evidently a swipe file to dwarf most swipe files. Alas, despite his formidable talent and basically fine storytelling, his cartoony approach to the heroes was a problem that was never solved. John Romita and I worked with him several times to try to change certain aspects of his work, but Frank--whether consciously or subconsciously or whatever, I dunno--resisted the changes. And when Vinnie Colletta left the book as inker and Frank Springer's inking made Robbins' art look more like Robbins' pencils, I started getting loving comments from the office staff about the "improved work"--and the books sales plummeted. My real mistake there is that I didn't push harder to get an inker who wasn't in love with Robbins' work, but since I had a great respect for Frank's work myself, I didn't do so. The book limped along and I learned a lesson which I shouldn't have needed, at that late stage in my career as an editor, to have learned: Good artwork alone doesn't sell. It has to be the RIGHT artwork, on the RIGHT series, with the RIGHT writing. (RED SONJA, drawn by the very talented Frank Thorne, underscored this lesson for me.)

At any rate, I hope the above clears up the reason why I'm glad to have Adrian Gonzales on the book in spite of the validity of your questions/objections. Jerry Ordway, Len Wein, and I have to watch certain costume details or historical matters especially carefully, but Adrian certainly contributes his part. In my opinion, ALL-STAR SQUADRON #7 turned out beautiful, and I think we're just BEGINNING to see what he and Ordway can do together.

P.S. Just wanted to mention that, in addition to the FIRE AND ICE film which we completed more than six months ago and which is now being animated for probably 1982 release, Gerry Conway and I are co-scripting with Ralph Bakshi a $15 million-budgeted live-action fantasy, about which I can say no more at this time. Gerry and I have also completed a deal, whereby, hard on the heels of that script, we will co-write a movie based on aspects of MAD Magazine for Warner Bros. (This is not, incidentally, in any way through DC Comics or MAD, in case someone figures Jenette Kahn somehow funneled work our way.)

[The comment on Adrian Gonzales resulted from a late-night discussion Jim Engel, Chuck Fiala, Jerry Sinkovec and I had about ALL-STAR SQUADRON even before we had seen it. We were trying to determine if we could "cast" a more suitable penciller/artist for the book than Rich Buckler, who we pegged as being too young to have truly accurate memories of the '40s ambiance we felt the book would probably hinge on. As it turned oût, I liked Buckler better than I thought I would, although there really wasn't much opportunity to see much of the ambiance we were talking about, with all the necessarily fast-paced military action going on. In any case, other than the busy-elsewhere Joe Kubert, we couldn't think of anybody more suitable. (Lee Elias came up, but even if he wasn't apparently being considered persona non grata, the kind of fan backlash toward his style that Robbins got would have been likely; others like Alex Toth and Fred Kida we thought would've been wishful thinking.) And, as you point out, with Jerry Ordway doing the inking, there's nothing to worry about on the art. (Three of today's finest inkers appeared in the past year or so, all at DC: Ordway, Dennis Jensen and Brett Breeding; it's merely a coincidence that two of the three are fellow Wisconsinites.)

And I too love Frank Robbins work. The thing I was always waiting for though, which never came--and probably couldn't in today's comics market -- was Robbins creating a book of his own which he'd write, more in the vein of JOHNNY HAZARD, for which he would NOT have to draw costumed characters --something he evidently felt uneasy doing, simply judging by the results he got on INVADERS and GHOST RIDER. (Maybe I'm wrong; with Mike Grell and Frank Miller going the writer/artist route, perhaps there might still be a chance, if anyone could find Robbins in Mexico and coax him back.)

This is probably as good a place as any to explain what's going on with us here. As noted in the DC news section, we were up in the air as far as news and credit-information goes while DC found a replacement for Paul Kupperberg in their public relations department, and it became so late that we figured it would be smartest to combine the listings for the next two months and be a few weeks behind, rather than remaining perpetually behind. It means another year in which we publish only eleven issues, but it does give us a longer time to prepare our 200th issue, which will -- we hope -- be something special. So, our lettercol is abbreviated -- which we hope will be made up for next issue. MT]

A Comic Reader

(continued from page 6)

ripoff "birth" sequence on page eight. This got past the Comic Code? Thanks, all involved. I'll keep the book away from my five-year-old son, too, in the same pile as last month's WONDER WOMAN.

I like MASTER OF KUNG FU #110, and have enjoyed this title all the more since Gene Day became the new regular artist. Sure, this book doesn't fulfill all my requirements of what makes a dandy comic; Doug Moench overwrites like all his Marvel brethren, but in the context of this strip, IT WORKS. Day isn't the new Alex Toth or John Buscema when it comes to storytelling, but his panel layouts are strong and attractive, and his pencilling is so damn good that I predict in the years to come, he will be an artist's artist, like the above-mentioned greats. Jack Abel may have found his quality-niche on this book; his inks complement Day's pencils well. It's apporent that all involved are giving their all to this title. That's not a lot for A Comic Reader to ask.

I will ask, though, what is Green

Arrow doing back in JLA #201? As soon as he gets in sight of his fellow do-gooders, the automatic smart-mouth slides into gear. GA himself questions why he's back with the team. So do I. This tiresome, one-dimensional characterization must be easy for Gerry Conway to write, so he's chosen to inflict it on us again. After #200, which was a brief respite indeed, Conway continues to take the flagship DC comic down, down, down.

Also recommended: DAREDEVIL, FANTASTIC FOUR, DC COMICS PRESENTS #44. The Sheldon Mayer/Steve Ditko story in GHOSTS #111 and the Captain Marvel Jr. tale in WORLD'S FINEST #277 are entertaining exceptions to otherwise lukewarm books.

"Santa Claus is a Killer!" continues writer Robin Snyder's almost unbroken chain of solid, satisfying yarns. (See the aforementioned UNEXPECTED #220.) Snyder is young, learning...and a big plus to DC's many negatives. And that thought warms A Comic Reader as much as the next log I'm going to throw in the fire.

Sam Kujava/1157 S. Fisk/Green Bay, WI 54304

Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12:12

By Gary Ricker

1:2 - "all is vanity," 12:12 - "of the making of books there is no end..."

MY APOLOGIES to Earl Geier (2114 N. Hamlin Avenue, Chicago, IL 60647) creator and publisher of BALD EGO #1 and 2 ($1.50 and $1.75) -- through either my sloppiness or a typesetting error, his address was garbled in TCR #195. Earl crafts raw, well-told, unhackneyed strips that feature no hints of Byrne, Starlin, Lucas or Roddenberry. Geier's an original, and that alone makes him a courageous fan publisher.

IN GENERAL:

FANTASY ADVERTISER #70. Martin Lock, 3 Marlow Ct., Britannia Sq., Worcester WR1 3DP ENGLAND. 5/2 pounds.
F/A is a recently-revived British adzine which, like TBG and the old RB*CC has a lot of features tucked between the ads. Pete Scott discusses super-heroes and vigilante justice, editor Lock reveals the future of his fine zine BEM, reviews and more. Nowhere near the size of the aforementioned zines -- 32 pages -- but still a small pleasure.

THE WHIZ KIDS #2. John G. Pierce, 55 Haldy Avenue, Columbus, OH 43204. $1.25.

I confess: I have a soft spot for single-focus fanzines like Joe Sarno's SPACE ACADEMY NEWSLETTER, Bart Bush's HARVEY COLLECTOR, the Gabbards' DUCKBERG TIMES. These people are fanatics, truly, infectiously. Their zines are small, not at all flashy, yet quite warm and alive. So it is with John Pierce's zine, dedicated to furthering the memory of Captain Marvel and the lamented Fawcett comics line. A crisp, if stilted, offset cover wraps around 22 mimeo pages featuring interviews with Fawcett writer/editor Rod Reed and SHAZAM! scripter E. Nelson Bridwell -- the former a very good one -- as well as shorter pieces on Captain Midnight in Brazil, TV reviews, trivia and letters. Old-fashioned fan fun.

STRIPS AND FICTION

AFTERWORLD #6. Larry Blake, Box 35, S. Vienna, OH 45369. $1.50.

24 pages of almost-good girl art, a super-heroine named Nightshade. Blake's style is pleasantly non-standard: no one in the book is 9 or 10 heads tall--though background clutter does confuse panel composition. The book really falls flat in scripting, sadly, reading as if pages are missing.

THE COMIC ZONE #13. West Florida Comic Book Club, 2703 East DeSoto Street, Pensacola, FL 32503. $1.00, 6/$6.00.

Zesty, youthful little clubzine dominated by strips. Mark Propst's efforts demonstrate he's got a sizable John Byrne collection, and a lot of tracing paper. Dave Caruba conducts a nice short interview with Kurt Schaffenberger, and L. Wayne Hicks has an excellent feature on Dick Tracy's 50th anniversary.

FUN COMICS No. 2. Paragon Publications, Box 1216, Longwood, FL 32750. $3.50.

Here's a feast for Simon and Kirby fans--Bill Black walks the tightrope of copyright infringement, bringing back Captain 3-D and Stuntman in an odd pastiche: a panel of Black, a panel by his collaborator Dan Reed, then an evocation of Kirby. Odd but entertaining. Highlights of the issue are two fine articles focusing on the great short-lived S&K books: STUNTMAN and BOYS' RANCH with many illustrations and lithe brushwork re-creations by Black. A Must for S&K fans.

HEMBECK #6. Fantaco Enterprises, 21 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12210. $2.25.

Fred Hembeck is a dyed-in-the-wool comics fan, but he has the all-too-rare ability to step outside of his fanaticism and point out the ridiculous in our hobby. Hembeck meanders through 32 pages commenting upon Wonder Woman's new insignia, kryptonite, French guys in berets, PREVUE T & A, of course Jimmy Olsen, and a lot more. Not as much shock-of-recognition or guffaws as usual, but still fun. Could someone at Fantaco maybe throw some zipatone on Fred's stuff? Just a thoug

SCAT COMICS GAZETTE Vol. 2, No. 1,2. Scat; P.O. Box 326, Northampton, MA 01060. 10/$2.50 in Massachusetts, 10/$5.00 U.S., 10/$7.50 foreign.

Other than some feeble stabs at political humor, this is a very entertaining little zine. Strips -- humor and satire -- seldom run more than a page or two. Brunelle, Turner and Hayman are stars in their own right -- SCAT is lightweight, frequent (10/year) fun. They pay for submissions, too--a dollar'll get you art/prose guidelines.

SPACE AND TIME #61. Gordon Linzner, 138 West 70th Street, Apt. 4-B, New York, NY 10023. $4, 2/$7.00.

S&T is 120 pages of mercenary barbarian and science fiction text stories. I'm not sure anyone wrote sword and sorcery with any degree of wit and character development outside of Fritz Lieber; the practitioners here are of the hard-boiled broadsword school, piling up paragraphs of regal genealogy, throne construction materials and invented compund words they think poetic. There are shorter, clever stories here: Mike Abrash's "True Romance," a charmer about true love in the shallow near future (neatly illustrated by Rich Krauss); Keith Daniels' short-short "Rain of Terror"; M. Lindholm's wistful mood piece, "Faunsdown Cottage," and Randall Larson contributes a page-and-a-half-long pun that even Dr. Asimov would groan at. With this issue S&T goes to twice-yearly frequency, succumbing to paper and postal price-increases. Depending on the size of its inventory, an S&T contributor could wait more than a year for a story to appear; for four bucks a reader has a choice between 120 uneven pages of fiction and poetry or the certainty of professional SF writers.

THE STAR SLAYERS Part One. Matt Bucher, 2550 Windgate Road, Bethel Park, PA 15102. $1.00.

This is a compilation of the first five issues of STAR SLAYERS, an epic-length space opera strip featuring plenty of blasters, clenched-teeth close-ups and characters drawn not from life but from Starlin and Grell. Chapter 4, drawn and inked (I believe by Steve Brooks and Bill Anderson; is cleanly and strikingly rendered.

[Continued from page 20]

produced some of the early features in NEW and NEW FUN COMICS, Centaur's STAR RANGERS and STAR COMICS, all of MLJ/Archie's original titles (PEP, ZIP, TOP-NOTCH, et al.), issues of early CAPTAIN MARVEL, MASTER and SLAM-BANG for Fawcett, comics for Ajax/Farrell between 1944 and 1947, and among others, most of Novelty Press and Star's output from 1945-1953. In 1941, Chesler became a publisher on his own, starting the Dynamic Comics group, which lasted until 1948 and included such titles as PUNCH and DYNAMIC. The Chesler shop closed in 1953 when Chesler became a partner in St. John Comics.

The Chesler shop was responsible for the appearance of many famous artist's first works, including pulp writer/fly scripter Frank Gruber, Joe Kubert, Creig Flessel, Frank Giacoia, Irwin Hasen, Paul Gustavson, Mort Meskin, Irv Novick, Al Plastino, Leonard Starr, George Tuska and many others.

Unlike many of the other comics professionals who have passed away of late, Chesler was extensively interviewed by Jim Steranko, who remained a close friend of his until his death.

DAREDEVIL No. 182, May. "She's Alive!" is by Frank Miller and Klaus Janson. Matt refuses to believe that Elektra is dead and begins to slowly lose his grasp on reality. Miller did the cover. [1/26]

DAZZLER No. 15, May. "Private Eyes" is by Danny Fingeroth, Frank Springer and Vince Colletta. Dazzler finds herself in San Francisco, which is Spider-Woman's turf. Bill Sienkiewicz did the cover. [1/26]

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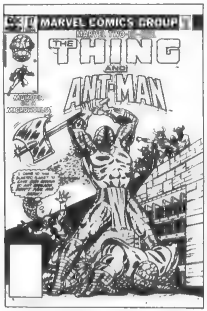
DENNIS THE MENACE No. 7, May. Dennis as -- Spider-Man? [1/26]

*KA-ZAR THE SAVAGE No. 14, May. "Daliva Means Forever" is by Bruce Jones, Brent Anderson and Armando Gil. Ka-Zar and Mele battle following the wedding of Shanna. Plus another Tales of Zabu chapter by Jones and Gil Kane. Anderson did the cover. [1/26]

KING CONAN No. 10, May. "Fang of Set" is by Doug Moench and Ernie Chan. With his wife and child missing, Conan finds himself so miserable he can't protect the kingdom. Chan did the cover. [1/26]

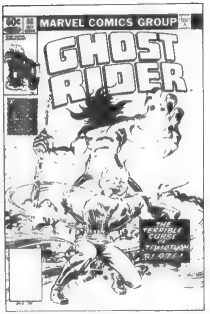


MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE No. 87, May. "The Menace of the Microworld" is by Tom DeFalco, Ron Wilson and Chic Stone. Trapped in Dr. Doom's Microworld, the Thing must depend on Ant-Man to get him back to the land of the giants again. Wilson and Stone did the cover. [1/26]

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN No. 228, May. "Murder By Spider" is by Jan Strnad, Rick Leonardi and Dave Simons. A man gains the power to control spiders and make them do his bidding -- including a certain spidery man. Mike Nasser and Joe Rubinstein did the cover. [2/2]

CAPTAIN AMERICA No. 269, May. "A Mind is a Terrible Thing to Waste" is by J. Marc De Matteis, Mike Zeck and John Beatty. In a preview look, Marvel's newest team, Team America, joins up with Cap to battle the Mad Thinker. Zeck and Beatty did the cover. [2/2]

CRAZY MAGAZINE No. 85, April. Special features in this issue include a pull-out "Boy Scout Handbook" by Steve Skeates and Ralph Reese, plus an



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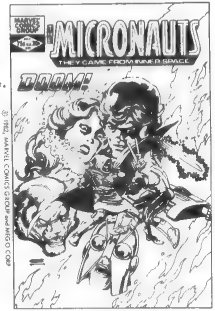
"Escape From New York" parody by Paul Kupperberg and Bob Camp. Bob Larkin did the cover. [2/2]

GHOST RIDER No. 68, May. "The Curse of Jonathon Blaze" is by Roger Stern, Bob Budiansky and Joe Rubinstein. In an attempt to revitalize the book, the origin is retold as GR is visited by a new villain. Budiansky and Rubinstein did the cover. [2/2]

*MICRONAUTS No. 41, May. "Everyone is Little in Liddleville" is by Bill



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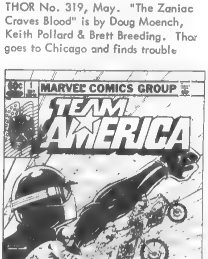
Mantlo, Gil Kane and Danny Bulanadi. At the mercy of Dr. Doom, the team finds their only ally to be -- the Puppet Master. Kane did the cover. [2/2]

*MOON KNIGHT No. 19, May. "Assault on Island Strange" is by Doug Moench, Bill Sienkiewicz and Steve Mitchell. MK and Marlene are in Lebanon stalking Arsenal, a super-terrorist. Bill Sienkiewicz did the cover. [2/2]

THE SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN No. 75, April. "The Temple of the Two-Eyed Thing" is by Michael Fleisher and Alfredo Alcala. The story's a book-lengther. Earl Norem did the cover. [2/9]

TEAM AMERICA No. 1, May. "The Origin of Team America" is by David Kraft, Mike Vosburg and Vince Colletta. Ideal Toys' motorcycle figures are turned into Marvel comics characters Outlaw, Honcho, and R.U. Reddy (to be joined by others later) battling the ol' hordes of Hydra as well as someone called the Marauder. Bob Layton did the cover. [2/2]

THOR No. 319, May. "The Zaniac Craves Blood" is by Doug Moench, Keith Pollard & Brett Breeding. Thor goes to Chicago and finds trouble



there, when a killer called Zaniac makes his presence known, the hard way. Pollard did the cover. [2/2]

THE AVENGERS No. 219, May. "By Divine Right" is by Jim Shooter, Bob Hall and Many Inkers. Moondragon and Drax the Destroyer are among the participants in this issue's story. Hall and Bob Layton did the cover. [2/9]

CONAN THE BARBARIAN No. 134, May. "A Hitch in Time" is by Bruce Jones, Gil Kane and Ernie Chan. If a damsel's in distress due to a sorcerer's spell, does Conan have the right to butt in -- if the sorcerer's the damsel's dad? Kane did the cover. [2/9]

THE INCREDIBLE HULK No. 271, May. "Now Somewhere In the Black Holes of Cirius Major There Lived a Young Boy Name of Rocket Raccoon" by Bill Mantlo and Sal Buscema puts Hulk into the Keystone Quadrant wherein he finds himself paired up with the cigar-smoking

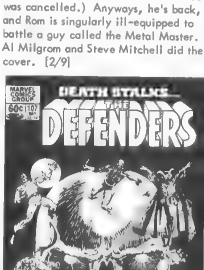
raccoon, Rocket, last seen in MARVEL PREVIEW #7 at the side of Wayfinder. Anyways, the pair fight the Mole and other animal types plus androids too. As well. Al Milgrom did the cover. [2/9]

*MARVEL FANFARE No. 2, May. "Fast Descent Into Hell, Part 2" is by Chris Claremont and Mike Golden. Spider-Man, Angel and Ka-Zar battle Sauron and his mutant minions. Also, "Annihilation" stars Mr. Fantastic in a story by Roger McKenzie, Trevor Von Eeden and Armando Gil. Mike Golden did the cover. Printed on slick cover stock throughout. [2/9]

MARVEL TALES STARRING SPIDER-MAN No. 139, May. From AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #2 comes "Duel to the Death With the Vulture" by Stan Lee and Steve Ditko, and "The Uncanny Threat of the Terrible Tinkerer" by Lee and Ditko. Ditko did the cover. [2/9]

POWER MAN AND IRON FIST No. 81, May. "The Road to Halwan" is by Mary Jo Duffy, Denys Cowan and Ricardo Villamonte. Luke and Danny take the road to Halwan in the best Hope and Crosby tradition. Cowan and Klaus Janson did the cover. [2/9]

ROM No. 30, May. "Silver Spiders In the Snow" is by Bill Mantlo, Sal Buscema and Joe Sinnott. "Way back in THE INCREDIBLE HULK #6, Hulk battled a cat from the planet Astra that almost put him out of commission. (Well, actually, in a way he did; Hulk was in limbo after that issue as his book was cancelled.) Anyways, he's back, and Rom is singularly ill-equipped to battle a guy called the Metal Master. Al Milgrom and Steve Mitchell did the cover. [2/9]



THE UNCANNY X-MEN No. 157, May. "Hide 'N' Seek" is by Chris Claremont, Dave Cockrum and Bob Wiacek. Shi'ar's about to invade Earth, and the rest of the X-Men are way over on the other side of the universe. Who to protect us? Nightcrawlker and Sprite that's who. Cockrum did the cover. [2/9]

THE DEFENDERS No. 107, May. "On Death and Dying" is by J. Marc De Matteis, Don Perlin and an inker. Valkyrie and Nighthawk are dead, and the funeral is attended by a coterie of super-heroes (as well as the Enchantress), but the funeral may be a bit premature. Al Milgrom did the cover. [2/16]

EPIC ILLUSTRATED No. 11, May. The Marada the She-Wolf story is concluded by Chris Claremont and John Bolton; Ken Steacy adapts another Harlan Ellison story, "Run For the Stars"; Weirdworld continues courtesy of Doug Moench, John Buscema, Marie Severin and Steve Oliff; Bob Rodi and

Joe Jusko contribute "Advice to a Barbarian"; Lee Marrs makes a "Pit Stop"; and Leopoldo Duranona does adaptations of two Franz Kafka stories, "Before the Law," and "Imperial Message." James Fox did the cover. [2/16]

FANTASTIC FOUR No. 242, May. "Terrax the Untamed" is by John Byrne. Terrax returns to Earth, causing headaches for Manhattan. Byrne and Terry Austin did the cover. [2/16]

IRON MAN No. 158, May. "Moms" is by Denny O'Neil, Carmine Infantino and Dan Green. A psychic woman's son uses her powers to psychicly take Iron Man's armor from him. Bob Layton did the cover. [2/16]

MARVEL TEAM-UP No. 117, May. "Scents...and Senses" is by J. Marc De Matteis, Herb Trimpe and Mike Esposito. What dastard puts Spider-Man and Wolverine in a booby-trapped castle and throws away the key? Bob Layton and Joe Rubinstein did the cover. [2/16]

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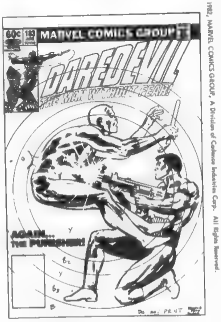
MASTER OF KUNG FU No. 112, May. "Commit and Destroy" is by Doug Moench, Magyar and Ricardo Villamonte. Evidently, a fill-in issue. Gene Day did the cover. [2/16]

PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN No. 66, May. "Electro Is Free" is by Bill Mantlo, Ed Hannigan and Al Milgrom. The title just about says it all. Milgrom did the cover. [2/16]

STAR WARS No. 59, May. "Bazaar" is by David Michelinie, Walt Simonson and Tom Palmer. When Lando, Luke and Chewbacca go to buy some new tie fighters, they get rooked. Walt Simonson did the cover. [2/16]



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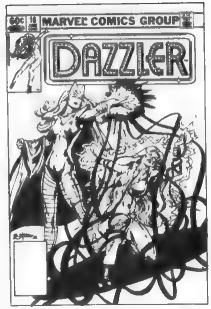
DAREDEVIL No. 183, June. "Child's Play" is by Roger McKenzie and Frank Miller, with art by Miller and Klaus Janson. The infamous, oft-delayed angel dust story finally appears. The Punisher guest-stars. Miller and Janson did the cover. [2/23]

DAZZLER No. 16, June. "Black Magic Woman" is by Danny Fingeroth, Frank Springer and Vince Colletta. Dazzler enters Asgard as a prisoner of the Enchantress. Bill Sienkiewicz did the cover. [2/23]

DENNIS THE MENACE No. 8, June. Written by Fred Toole with art by the Ketcham Studio, who also did the cover. [2/23]

*KA-ZAR THE SAVAGE No. 15, June. "A Lovely Day For an Execution" is by Bruce Jones, Brent Anderson and Armando Gil. Ka-Zar goes on trial for Mele's murder. Also: Tales of Zabu by Bruce Jones and Val Mayerik. Anderson did the cover. [2/23]



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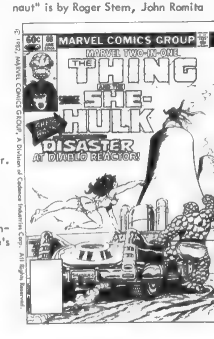
MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE No. 88, June. "Disaster at Diablo Reactor" is by David Kraft, Alan Kupperberg and Chic Stone. After a short hiatus, the Savage She-Hulk returns to team-up with the Thing. Kupperberg and Frank Giacoia did the cover. [2/23]

SPIDER-WOMAN No. 44, June. "Vengeance" is by Chris Claremont, Steve Leialoha. Lindsay's fighting for her life in a San Francisco hospital, and Spider-Woman's doing the same versus the Viper, learning something about herself and her adversary she may not want to know. Leialoha did the cover. [2/23]

TEAM AMERICA No. 2, June. "Deathnace" is by David Kraft, Mike Vosburg and Vince Colletta. Jack O'Lantern and Hydra take on the new team, which is joined by new members Wrench and Cowboy. Bob Layton did the cover. [2/23]

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN No. 229, June. "Nothing Can Stop the Juggernaut" is by Roger Stern, John Romita



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Woody Woodpecker 197___198___
Yosemite Sam 77___78___79___

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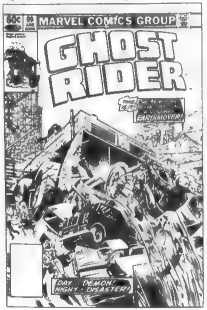
please list any MARVEL, DC, HARVEY, CHARLTON, or ARCHIE titles on separate sheet. Thank you.

Jr. and Jim Mooney. Juggernaut does something nasty to Madam Web, and Spidey doesn't care for it at all. J.R. Jr. and Al Milgrom did the cover. [3/2]

CAPTAIN AMERICA No. 270, June. "The Man Who Cares" is by J. Marc De Matteis, Mike Zeck and John Beatty. A mysterious person from Steve Rogers' past appears and lands in the middle of a fracas between Cap and a mystery foe. Zeck and Beatty did the cover. [3/2]

CRAZY MAGAZINE No. 86, May. The special feature this issue is "The Origin of Obnoxio" by John Lakey. All the usual features are also included. Bob Larkin did the cover. [3/2]

DOCTOR STRANGE No. 53, June. "Land of the Pharaohs" is by Roger Stern, Marshall Rogers and Terry Austin. For all of you old folks who can recall FANTASTIC FOUR #19, this is a cross-over with that issue and that issue's villain, Rama Tut, whilst Doctor Strange makes a search through time. Marshall Rogers did the cover. [3/2]



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GHOST RIDER No. 69, June. "Personal Demons" is by Roger Stern, Bob Budiansky and Dave Simons. Ghost Rider battles a 50-ton earth-mover. Budiansky and Simons did the cover. [3/2]

G.I. JOE No. 1, June. "Operation: Ladykiller" is by Larry Hama, Herb Trimpe and Bob McLeod. G.I. Joe returns as an anti-terrorist task-force leader battling the forces of Cobra. The second story is "Hot Potato" by Hama, Don Perlin and Jack Abel. Printed on slick paper, $1.50; this issue is to be advertised on national television. Trimpe and McLeod did the cover. [3/2]

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*MICRONAUTS No. 42, June. "Knave, Thy Name is Nemesis" is by Bill Mantlo, Gil Kane and Danny Bulanadi. The Wasp and the tiny-team team-up to take on the all-new Doctor Nemesis. Kane did the cover. [3/2]

*MOON KNIGHT No. 20, June. "Cut Adrift Off the Coast of America" is by Doug Moench, Bill Sienkiewicz and Steve Mitchell. Arsenal surrounds Manhattan with ships and threatens to set the whole place on fire, and Moon Knight has to stop him. Sienkiewicz did the cover. [3/2]

THE SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN No. 76, May. "Dominion of the Bat" is by Michael Fleisher, John Buscema and Alfredo Alcala. Also: "Island of Pirates' Doom" is by Roy Thomas, Buscema and Danny Bulanadi, continuing the story begun two issues ago. Joe Chiodo did the cover. [3/2]

THOR No. 320, June. "Blake's Menagerie" is by Doug Moench, Keith Pollard and Brett Breeding. Don Blake's friends have disappeared, and in their

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place appear five esoteric Asgardian creatures -- right in his office! Al Milgrom did the cover. [3/2]

THE AVENGERS No. 220, June. "War Against the Gods" is by Jim Shooter, Bob Hall and Dan Green. Moondragon's delusions of grandeur have apparently taken hold of her mind, and only Drax the Destroyer can aid the Avengers in discovering why. Hall did the cover. [3/9]

BIZARRE ADVENTURES No. 31, May. This is a special "Violence" issue, and contains: "Philistine" by Denny O'Neil and Frank Miller; "Kip and Muffy and Dr. Deth" by Larry Hama and Ralph Reese; "Rupert Rabbit" by Hama and Mark Armstrong; "The Hangman" by Mark Gruenwald and Bill Sienkiewicz (featuring the Moon Knight character); an untitled two pager by John Byrne; and the inevitable Bucky Bizarre episode by Steve Skeates and Steve Smallwood. Joe Jusko did the cover. [3/9]

CONAN THE BARBARIAN No. 135,

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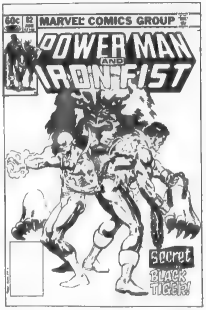
June. "The Forest of Night" is by Steve Grant, Mark Silvester, Joe Rubinstein and Danny Bulanadi. Shunned by everyone he meets, Conan is only embraced when entering the forest...a dubious pleasure. Walt Simonson did the cover. [3/9]

DENNIS THE MENACE COMICS DIGEST No. 2, June. More reprints. [3/9]

THE INCREDIBLE HULK No. 272, June. "Weird Song of the Wendigo" is by Bill Mantlo and Sal Buscema. Hulk's in Canada where he meets up with Sasquatch and Wendigo. Subplots involve Rick Jones, Betty Ross and Bereet. Al Milgrom did the cover. [3/9]

MARVEL SUPER-HERO CONTEST OF CHAMPIONS No. 1, June. Part one of the former Olympics-special is by Bill Mantlo, John Romita Jr. and Pablo Marcos. EVERY living, active super-



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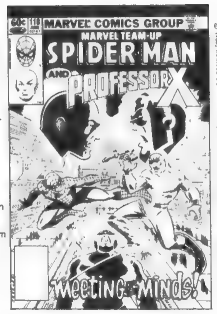
hero in the Marvel universe is involved in a grand scheme of the Grandmaster. Romita Jr. and Bob Layton did the cover. [3/9]

MARVEL TALES STARRING SPIDER-MAN No. 140, June. "Doctor Octopus" by Stan Lee and Steve Ditko is reprinted in its entirety from AMAZING SPIDER-MAN No. 3. Steve Ditko did the cover. [3/9]

POWER MAN AND IRON FIST No. 82, June. "The Secret of the Black Tiger" is by Jo Duffy, Denys Cowan and Carl Potts. Luke and Danny battle the nation of Halwan in their attempt to rescue Jeryn Hogarth, besides having to contend with Boris and Ninotchka. Cowan and Joe Rubinstein did the cover. [3/9]

ROM No. 31, June. "West Virginia Real" is by Bill Mantlo, Sal Buscema and Joe Sinnott. Rom makes a prison break-in to prevent the Brotherhood of Evil mutants from busting out. Al



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Milgrom did the cover. [3/9]

THE UNCANNY X-MEN No. 158, June. "The Life of Late I Led" is by Chris Claremont, Dave Cockrum and Bob Wiacek. Professor X is in a coma, everyone's getting mutant-intolerance, and the X-Men and Carol Danvers head to Washington to wipe out the government files on themselves, just in case. What they don't know is that that's where the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants is headquartered (those who aren't in the prison Ram finds them in in the title previous to this one). Cockrum and Wiacek did the cover. [3/9]

MARVEL PAPERBACK No. 6, 1982. "Second Genesis" by Len Wein and Dave Cockrum (from GIANT-SIZE X-MEN No. 1), "Psi-War" by Chris Claremont, John Byrne and Terry Austin (X-MEN #117) -- the contents of this collection of NEW X-MEN stories. Dave Cockrum did the new cover painting. [3/15]

THE VERY BEST OF DENNIS THE MENACE No. 2, June. And more reprints. [3/9]

THE DEFENDERS No. 108, June. "The Wasteland" is by J. Marc DeMatteis, Don Perlin and Al Milgrom and Co. Hellcat, Silver Surfer, the Hulk and Sub-Mariner follow the commands of the Enchantress to attempt to save Valkyrie's life, while Dr. Strange, Gargoyle, the Beast and Spider-Man are off on another secret mission of their own. Perlin and Milgrom did the cover. [3/16]

FANTASTIC FOUR No. 243, June. "To Save Galactus" is by John Byrne. Strange as it seems, the FF are in a

position where they must save Galactus's life. Also -- Frankie Raye's final fate. Byrne and Terry Austin did the cover. [3/16]

IRON MAN No. 159, June. "The Menace Within" is by Denny O'Neil, Carmine Infantino and Dan Green. Iron Man battles Sir Knight. Bob Layton did the cover. [3/16]

MARVEL TEAM-UP No. 118, June. "Meeting of the Minds" is by J. Marc DeMatteis, Herb Trimpe and Mike Esposito. Spider-Man and Professor X (apparently not yet in his X-MEN coma yet) take on Mentallo, the Fixer and Professor Power. John Romita Jr. and Jack Abel did the cover. [3/16]

MASTER OF KUNG FU No. 113, June. "Learn and Burn" is by Doug Moench, and Alan Kupperberg. This one's a mystery to everybody we know. Gene Day did the cover. [3/16]

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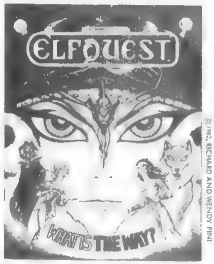
PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN No. 67, June. "Boomerang, the Killer Who Always Comes Back" is by Bill Mantlo, Ed Hannigan and Al Milgrom. I think that just about says it all, don't you? Hannigan and Milgrom did the cover. [3/16]

STAR WARS No. 60, June. "Shira's Story" is by David Michelinie, Walt Simonson and Tom Palmer. Luke aids the last survivor of a race in her battle with the forces that wiped them out. Simonson did the cover. [3/16]

WHAT IF? No. 33, June. "What If Iron Man Was Trapped in the Time of King Arthur?" is by Steven Grant, Don Perlin and Bob Layton. This story follows up on plot-threads from IRON MAN #150. Also, following up DAZZLER #11, "What If Dazzler Had Become the Herald of Galactus?" by Danny Fingeroth, Mike Vosburg and Jon D'Agostino. Bob Layton did the cover. [3/16]

Et Al



Wendy and Richard Pini (WaRP Graphics, 2 Reno Road, Pougkeepsie, NY 12603, have produced issue #12 of ELFQUEST. It shall be available in shops on February 26th.

Books

By Mark Sabljak

GENERIC BOOKS? They did it with ketchup, with green beans and with coffee, so why not with books? I'm talking about what look to be generic books. You may have seen them on your newsstand: they have a plain white cover with black stripes about two-thirds of the way up. They proclaim "No-Frills Book" and carry the catchy titles of "Science Fiction" and "Mystery" and "Western."

So I picked up the Science Fiction book, figuring it was a cheap tease for a new, longer-length book as this thing is only 58 pages long. Nope. In fact, though it runs perhaps a quarter to a fifth of the length of a regular paperback, the price on this one was $1.50. That's right, $1.50.

Was my money well-spent? Well, you shouldn't judge a book by its cover, but this one gave you one more clue. Under the racing stripes were the words: "Complete with Everything: Aliens, Giant Ants, Space Cadets, Robots, One Plucky Girl."

Now if that wasn't enough to offend about 99% of all serious science-fiction fans, the book -- which can probably be read in about 45 minutes by any three-year-old -- was about as exciting as watching six straight half-hour sitcoms on TV.

Jove Books is the publisher of this series. I can only hope they will be sending out a notice soon that the whole thing was a joke.

(P.S. I don't want to give the impression that there wasn't some redeeming value to the no-frills book. It makes a good bookmark in a thicker, more intelligent book.)

YEAR OF THE BARBARIAN -- With the impending release of the CONAN movie, Ace Books is gearing up for a major effort centered on the Robert E. Howard character. Among the first original works in the wave is RED SONJA #1: THE RING OF IKRIBU by David C. Smith and Richard L. Tierney selling for $2.25. The introduction is handled capably by Roy Thomas, who wrote and edited for Marvel, which brought Conan and Red Sonja to life through their comics. I must admit, I was a bit skeptical about the ability to take a character only sketched out in Howard's work and bring her to life. But Smith and Tierney have done it.

I recommend this book to Conan fans. It is very capably written, has an interesting storyline following Red Sonja's adventures as a mercenary helping a good ruler regain his kingdom from a sorcerer, and fills in nicely Red Sonja's past and the origin of her powers with the sword.

If the other books in this series are anywhere near the level of the first, it will be an added bonus to Conan fans.

One negative note. There is an original cover done by Boris Vallejo. While he seemed to catch the eye years ago, his work has not seemed to have matured since then. Sonja, who is described in the book as a woman of action, is posed like a statue, with her sword raised above her head in a rather odd angle. And while it looks as if she is standing on a snow-covered mountain, she is not wearing enough to keep a giant ant warm.

MUCHO MACHO -- The recent wave of men's adventure books continues. My friendly neighborhood bookstore owner says he can't keep the new Executioner book in stock. Numbered 39, it stresses the words "Marc Bolan" and is the resumption of the series after author Don Pendleton left Pinnacle Books to join Worldwide Publishers of Canada, which produces the Harlequin romance books.

Another brand-new paperback series that looks to have promise is that of the "American Avenger." Books No. 1 and 2 are out entitled BEAT A DISTANT DRUM and RIDE THE TIGER, both with sharp wraparound covers by Dan Daily. In accompanying publicity literature, the author, Robert Emmett, is described as a former Special Forces commando and CIA operative who will be imbuing his books with "insider's knowledge and a political and technical sophistication that compares with the very best in espionage fiction." That's a pretty heady promise, and I'll report back next time on how it stacked up. The books' main character is Michael McVeigh, described as "a solitary, but righteous hero... half-Irish, half-Seminole Indian torn between his desire to smash the Soviet military machine and his hatred for his own spy masters."

Pocket Books is also introducing a new adventure series -- "Digger." Written by Warren Murphy, the creator of the "Destroyer" series, the Digger is Julian Burroughs, an insurance investigator based in Las Vegas. The first two books, priced at $2.25, are SMOKED OUT and FOOLS FLIGHT. Pocket Books promises a Digger book every two months.

A LITTLE CULTURE -- Every once in a while I must escape from the world of escapist literature which I love. Two arrivals to my house are tempting me. First is James Michener's U.S.A., a 342-page large-sized hardcover that will set you back $25.00. Michener, whose epic works like CENTENNIAL and HAWAII have covered the country with fictional adventures, now breaks the U.S.A. into five regions and describes through words and well-selected pictures the make-up of this large and difficult-to-describe land. Sure, the price isn't cheap, but you'll have a birthday this year -- so ask for it as a gift. Another temptation is WILLIAM SAFIRE ON LANGUAGE, a 330-page trade paperback ($5.95) from Avon. The book is a compilation of Safire's witty and important columns on language that make up the lead article of THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE. Safire carries on a dialgue with his readers, talking about proper usage, correct pronunciations, the roots of our daily discourse and the growing vacuous vogue lingo. Language, I have found, is a great adventure -- maybe even greater than a hard-boiled, cigar-chomping private dick.

RECEIVED -- From Ace, the sequel to H. Bean Piper's LITTLE FUZZY and FUZZY SAPIENS entitled FUZZY BONES. Written by William Tuning, it sells for $2.50. From Tor, THE HOUSE IN NOVEMBER by Keith Laumer at $2.75, and NOT THIS AUGUST, by Frederick Pohl. Pohl's book is a reprint of a 1955 book in the vein of 1984 in which America is conquered by communism. From Harmony Books, THE RESTAURANT AT THE END OF THE UNIVERSE, the sequel to THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY by Douglas Adams. I got this $7.95 hardcover book the day I wrote this column, and will have to wait until next time to give you an idea of its worth. From St. Martin's, JOHN CREASEY'S CRIME COLLECTION 1981, compiling many of the top stories from the Britain's Crime Writers' Association. At $12.95, it includes authors like John Aiken, Herbert Harris and H.R.F. Keating.

COMING COMICS -- In March from St. Martin's, a new collection of Gahan Wilson. Entitled "Is Nothing Sacred?" (to which, undoubtedly, Wilson will reply "NO!"), it will sell for $5.95 in paperback and $14.95 in hardcover.

Comics History

The Back-Seat Super-Heroes
By Lou Mougin

PROLOGUE: 1966 and 1967 were financially the hottest years for comics heroes in the Second Heroic Age, due to the "camp" fad initiated by the BATMAN TV show. During this period many companies leaped on the bandwagon with new lines of costumed heroes, all of which died out with the end of the fad in 1968. Among these were Tower, which we covered in part one of this article; Charlton, which we examined last issue and conclude this issue; and Harvey, Mighty and a handful of companies who boasted only one or two super-heroes apiece, which will be covered in the next three parts of this series. None of these minor-league creations ever matched the popularity of Marvel and DC heroes, despite the promise shown by quite a few of them; hence Jim Steranko's label, "The Back-Seat Super-Heroes."

II. "ACTION HEROES? WE'VE GOT 'EM!" (Conclusion)

4. Like a Bolt of Thunder

The new super-hero, clad in eye-catching blue and red, leaped from the center of a target directly at the reader's eye-level. To the right, a pair of vignettes introduced his first enemies: a mysterious hooded Eastern mastermind and a scar-faced Chicago-style gangster. The caption read: "All of the mysterious powers of ancient Tibet were granted to PETER CANNON ...See his training, his ordeals, his first great test...THE ORIGIN!" And above it all, the logo identified Charlton's newest super-star:

"Peter Cannon...THUNDERBOLT!"

The origin story blended several familiar elements into an opening that could have been an episode of KUNG FU. A blond-haired youth, garbed in a costume of alternating red and blue halves, stood in the floor of an arena. Facing him was a bespectacled High Abbot. Like an Old Testament prophet, the prelate announced:

"Let all who be present hear my words, for this day a chosen one will be put to the proof! The power of will and strength of body are to be tested here. ARE YOU READY, PETER CANNON?"

Features grimly set, the costumed man nodded. And, as the door behind which the first trial awaited began to rise, the narrative switched to a three-page flashback...

The blond hero had been the son of American medical missionaries who had given their lives to end a Black Plague breakout in a Himalayan monastery. As a repayment, the High Abbot allowed their infant son to be trained in the ancient secrets all such temples abounded with (check out a multitude of satisfied customers, from Plastic Man to Iron Fist). In this case, the treasure was the Ancient Scrolls, whose tutelage included the harnessing of the normally-unused nine-tenths of the brain for increased mental and physical prowess. Upon reaching maturity, Peter Cannon faced a threefold trial sequence. And two had been prepared by his mortal enemy, the Hooded One.

The first test pitted the youth against a dozen bowmen, who nocked shafts and let fly with dealy accuracy. Concentrating his powers, Peter Cannon leaped fifteen feet into the air from a standing start. The arrows passed harmlessly below him. The second ordeal: a hand-to-hand battle against a man-killing tiger. A one-page duel ensued, with Cannon ultimately breaking the great cat's neck. But not before paying a price: "Shoulder aches... where he mauled me! Pain...growing in intensity! Must stop it...have to concentrate! I can do it...I must do it...I WILL DO IT!"

Miraculously, the hurt and bleeding stopped. The threefold self-command to unleash his inner resources was to become Thunderbolt's trademark, as important to the story as Captain Marvel's "Shazam!" When Peter Cannon affirmed that he could, must, and therefore WOULD do a thing, it got DONE, and done spectacularly at that.

The third trial, the most difficult, is the High Abbot's only contribution. Cannon stands before an open doorway which leads to the outside world. His mission: to use his abilities for good in America. "I will do as you say, High Abbot, but I wish no part of civilization, its wars and hatreds!" mutters the hero in best Shangri-La fashion. "I will leave here with regret!"

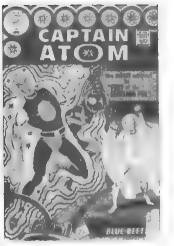
His childhood friend, the turbaned Tabu, is allowed to accompany Peter on his quest. Tabu's status in the series was roughly between that of Kato and Robin: he was friend and confidant to the hero, and a prod to get him into action, but rarely took active part in the battles. One story was built entirely around Tabu, as Thunderbolt was dispatched to one of those hidden valleys containing Miracle Herbs guaranteed to bring sure-fire cures to dying friends. Naturally, it was called "This One's For Tabu."

The final principal of the series is introduced in the person of the Hooded One, Charlton's answer to Doctor Doom. His hatred of Thunderbolt spanned twenty years and was quite understandable. As a youth, the Hooded One had become permanently disfigured while retrieving an unexploded bomb from the flaming wreckage of a plane that had crashed near the lamastery. His reward was the priviledge of studying the Ancient Scrolls. Yet, when Peter Cannon became the chosen vessel, the Hooded One's studies were forcibly interrupted. The cloaked figure was subsequently expelled from the monastery for his hatred of Cannon. "Go, foreigner, back to your own people!" snarled the villain as he watched the departing pair. "You have robbed me of power and greatness, and for that you will soon pay!"

The Hooded One's first plot deserved an "A" for originality. Working through an American gangster named Dum-Dum Barnes, the mastermind mails unhatched dinosaur eggs to a museum in Cannon and Tabu's new home city. (Peter Cannon was now employed as a free-lance writer. His first article? A piece on Himalayan culture... but of course!) Barnes' gang proceeds to treat the eggs with the Hooded One's long-distance prescription formula. Within seconds of injection, the eggs hatch...and two baby Tyrannosaurs attain their full growth in seconds!

In a scene straight out of GODZILLA (or perhaps, more appropriately, GORGO, or KONGA, or REPTILICUS), the dinosaurs run rampant and the hoods loot the chaos-ridden city. Events quickly move to a climax. Peter Cannon views the carnage on television, while Tabu prompts, "Could not a chosen one be of some assistance, friend Peter?"

"I don't know, Tabu," sighs Cannon. "I still want no part of civilization, but I can't let innocent people



die, either! If I get involved in this, I give up my privacy and seclusion, forever!" At this, Tabu displays Cannon's two-color training uniform with one new addition: a domino mask. The next panel depicts the costumed Cannon, standing within a shaft of light. A super-hero is born!

When the masked man makes his entrance, he does it with forties-style panache. Dum-Dum Barnes and his gang stand confronted by a harbinger of doom, framed against the fury of a lightning storm. "Vultures... scavengers...robbers of the dead!" intones Cannon in a moment of perfect melodrama. In the next second, he lashes into the paralyzed thugs and batters the gang into unconsciousness within minutes. It took all of one panel.

One dinosaur falls victim to explosives hurled by the hero. Then, giving chase, the mystery man confronts Dum-Dum on a building roof. Before Cannon can close in on his prey, the gangster sees the gigantic hulk of the remaining Tyrannosaur approaching. Screaming like a banshee, he topples headlong off the roof... In the meantime, Cannon pitches a box of dynamite down the monster's gullet, eliminating it from the neck up. The red-and-blue figure sprints off into the sunset as the obligatory cops and newsmen show up. "Whoever he is, we owe him a debt of gratitude!" declares an officer. "He came on real strong, like a BOLT OF THUNDER!"

Techically, of course, thunder doesn't come in bolts, but it mattered little. The new name stuck, and Peter Cannon's masked identity was henceforth known as THUNDERBOLT. Though he strove to keep a healthy distance from the civilized world, a new menace reared its head like clockwork every two months. And, after suitable prodding from Tabu, our hero would don uniform, mask and tennis shoes and pit the wisdom of the Ancient Scrolls against the weirdest villains the Charlton cosmos had ever seen.

Thunderbolt was the progeny of Peter A. Morisi, one of the more obscure artist/writers of the mid-sixties. The main reason was ANONYMITY; Morisi signed his work only as "PAM" and, for whatever reason, refused to let Charlton divulge his true name. Only the denizens of fandom knew the creator's true identity, and it drove letter-writers at large up the wall trying to guess the names behind the initials. When one writer DID guess correctly, Giordano censored the printed letter.

Technically, Morisi was only competent. Pages were invariably divided into five or six-panel layouts, with no deviations from the square border. Background were often non-existent. His characters lacked facial expression; they were lucky if their eyebrows shifted to indicate their moods. Most scenes were shoulder or waist shots with a very, very few full-figure shots. And PAM had never even heard of speed lines, sound effects, multiple images or colorful impact splash pages. It was as plain-vanilla as you could get!

Still, there was something compelling about the art. Morisi's storytelling ability, within its limits, was unfailing. His action figures resembled frozen, high-speed photographs. PAM's art was never ugly (an advice from an art-director in the '50s, he had based his style on that of George Tuska and had refined it from there); it had an indefinable quality as impossible to describe as that of Basil Wolverton. You had to see it to understand it. Pete Morisi could never have worked for Marvel or DC in that period, but his style was perfect for Charlton, and for THUNDERBOLT.

Stories were played in absolute straightness, with no Ditko zaniness or Jack Kirby slapstick. Any humor in T-Bolt's world was strictly throwaway. Thunderbolt made his position clear: he HATED being a super-hero. His pacifist soul rebelled at using his powers offensively against human beings. But if there was a job to be done, SOMEBODY had to do it, and Thunderbolt was more than capable. He got no kicks whatsoever from his obligatory slugfests; super-heroing, to Peter Cannon, was a dirty business.

PAM's writing style probably pulled more strokes from Lester Dent than Stan Lee. His villains were grim and ruthless masterminds, pulplike in derivation. Panels were filled with narrative boxes that described in detail the accompanying action, as in this example:

"Then, in a sudden, desperate action, Thunderbolt makes his move, and the dark, churning waters become a whirlpool of battle! Man and saurian vie for position, as the silent struggle lasts an eternity of minutes, until, finally, the victim becomes the victor..."

And one thing more: PAM had no equal in creating truly horrifying death-traps. Even Nick Fury might have flinched at a few of the dooms Thunderbolt had to outwit. One in particular deserves recounting here from issue #56. A villain, the Cobra, has drugged the hero with a serum that leaves normal men mindless zombies. Tied hand and foot, Thunderbolt is left lying helpless on a cellar floor. In a corner, the lid of a wicker basket is thrust aside and a nine-foot-long king cobra emerges.

The coiled death slinks nearer in a suspenseful four-panel build-up. Desperately, Thunderbolt struggles to bring his hampered faculties to bear. The snake prepares to strike. "Only seconds left to...shake this dizziness and force myself...to think! Have... to try! I can do it...I must do it... I WILL DO IT!"

And even as the cobra strikes, the embattled T-Bolt attacks, faster than his namesake...and TEARS THE COBRA'S THROAT OUT WITH HIS BARE TEETH!

Splash panels were handled with class and atmosphere. They usually depicted a symbolic scene from the story, coupled with the label "Special Case Number (0001 on up...)" (perhaps inspired by a similar numbering system used on SARGE STEEL stories). The only copy, besides the title and logo, was a quotation that set the tone of the story like a Will Eisner SPIRIT intro. Here's an example of one of the better pieces, from THUNDERBOLT #54:

Charlton Comics Index

The Charlton Comics Group was published by Ed Levy, Burton Levey and John Santangelo, and edited by Patrick Masulli (from the late '50s through July 1966) and Dick Giordano (August 1966 through the Spring of 1968). There are many titles published by Charlton which would ordinarily be included in this index which, because of space, have not. These include the various masked western characters (MASKED RAIDER, GUNMASTER), mid-'50s super-heroes (BLUE BEETLE, NATURE BOY, ZAZA THE MYSTIC, MR. MUSCLES), and science-fiction and mystery titles with no continuing characters. Also left out are other western and military titles.

Charlton's chief writer was Joe Gill and he scripted nearly every non-credited story herein. Since credits were not given regularly until Dick Giordano took over as editor, we are not assigning any of the stories to him, but chances are good he did them. His easily-recognizable style is characterized by his usage of the past tense in captions. All other known writers are credited.

Since the scope of the article this index accompanies only encompasses the mid-sixties era, all post-1968 titles including HERCULES, E-MAN, CHARLTON BULLSEYE and the 1979 version of SPACE ADVENTURES have been omitted.

STRANGE SUSPENSE STORIES
Starring Captain Atom

Volume 1

75, June 1965 Cover: Steve Ditko
- **Captain Atom "Captain Atom" (9)
  Story: Pat Masulli Art: Steve Ditko from SPACE ADVENTURES #33
- Captain Atom "Captain Atom on Planet X" (5)
  Story: Joe Gill? Art: Steve Ditko from SPACE ADVENTURES #36
- Captain Atom "The Second Man in Space" (7)
  Story: Joe Gill? Art: Steve Ditko from SPACE ADVENTURES #34
- "Out of This World" (3)
  Art: John Severin from ?
- FILLER: The Ghost of Amy Rector (1) Ernie Bache; text (2)

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76, August 1965 Cover: Steve Ditko
- Captain Atom "The Wreck of X-44" (5)
  Story: Joe Gill? Art: Steve Ditko from SPACE ADVENTURES #36
- Captain Atom "The Little Wanderer" (5)
  Story: Joe Gill? Art: Steve Ditko from SPACE ADVENTURES #35
- Captain Atom "Test-Pilot's Nightmare" (5)
  Story: Joe Gill? Art: Steve Ditko from SPACE ADVENTURES #39
- Captain Atom "A Victory For Venus" (5)
  Story: Joe Gill? Art: Steve Ditko from SPACE ADVENTURES #37
- "The First Space Pirate" (3)
  Art: Rocke Mastroserio
- FILLER: text (1)

77, October 1965 Cover: Steve Ditko
- Captain Atom "The Silver Lady From Venus" (5)
  Story: Joe Gill? Art: Steve Ditko from SPACE ADVENTURES #42
- Captain Atom "An Ageless Weapon" (5)
  Story: Joe Gill? Art: Steve Ditko from SPACE ADVENTURES #39
- Captain Atom "The Boy and the Stars" (5)
  Story: Joe Gill? Art: Steve Ditko from SPACE ADVENTURES #40
- Captain Atom "The Space Prowlers" (5)
  Story: Joe Gill? Art: Steve Ditko from SPACE ADVENTURES #37
- "High Dancer" (3)
  Art: Bill Molno
- FILLER: text (1)

CAPTAIN ATOM

Volume 2

78, December 1965 Cover: Steve Ditko
- **"The Gremlins From Planet Blue" (2: "Planet Blue") (20)
  Story: Joe Gill Art: Steve Ditko/Rocke Mastroserio
- FILLER: The Vast Unknown (3) Ernie Bache; text (1)

79, February-March 1966 Cover: Steve Ditko/Rocke Mastroserio
- **"Master of Moods" (20)
  Story: Steve Ditko/Joe Gill Art: Steve Ditko/Rocke Mastroserio
- FILLER: Moon-Run (3) Steve Ditko from?; text (1)

80, May 1966 Cover: Steve Ditko/Rocke Mastroserio
- **"Death Knell of the World" (20)
  Story: Joe Gill Art: Steve Ditko/Rocke Mastroserio
- FILLER: Our Planet Earth (3) Bill Fraccio/Tony Tallarico; text (1)

81, July 1965 Cover: Steve Ditko/Rocke Mastroserio
- **"The Five Faces of Doctor Spectro" (20)
  Story: Joe Gill Art: Steve Ditko/Rocke Mastroserio
- FILLER: text (1); What Happened to the U.F.O.? (1) Rocke Mastroserio; Jiu Jitsu: A Way of Life (2) Frank McLaughlin (story/art)

82, September 1966 Cover: Steve Ditko/Rocke Mastroserio
- **"Captain Atom Vs. the Ghost" (20)
  Story: Dave Kaler Art: Steve Ditko/Rocke Mastroserio [introduction: Nightshade]

Unto what can compare the destiny
of man?
Exists there a parallel so indefinitely
complex?
Liken it, perhaps, to the wind or
the flame,
Whose course runs erratic toward
inevitable necessity.

Suggest it, too, to the maze of a
web,
And the confusion of strands that
conform to a pattern.
For is not Destiny after all, the
direction of a scheme,
And the crossing of paths, from which
none escape?

Peter Cannon faced off against the most bizarre and original villains in the Charlton stable when PAM held the reins. Besides the Hooded One, the line-up included Evila, a resurrected Egyptian sorceress; Eric Gore, a master of germ warfare whose left hand was an ape's paw; the Tong, master of an Oriental crime empire; and a living mummy who rose from the fusion of a living and a dead mind. It looked like a cast call for the foes of Doc Savage and the Shadow combined.

Pete Morisi left the series near the end of its run, with Denny O'Neil and Pat Boyette finishing up three filler issues. Though their stories had some merit, none could capture the tense, unusual atmosphere of PAM's T-Bolt tales. The series died with its eleventh issue. Morisi stayed on at Charlton, doing westerns, horror, science fiction and VENGEANCE SQUAD until 1977.

THUNDERBOLT stood among the best of the back-seat heroes in writing quality and conception, but the unspectacular art, the end of the Back-seat Era and the lack of any further super-hero input from PAM caused his memory to fade soon after 1968. Hopefully, this article will help to remedy that condition somewhat; Thunderbolt was a character who DESERVES remembering.

5. Big Man On Dojo

Back in late 1965, Bruce Lee was still a year away from his role as Kato, the "gung-fu" master on THE GREEN HORNET. It would be seven more years before Kwai Chang Caine would stalk the American West on prime-time TV. And Fu Manchu plotted from his lair on the paperback rack, but the news of his having a son, and a Master of Kung Fu at that, might have shocked the old mastermind right out of his fingernails. Spy movies had made the public generally aware that karate, judo, kung fu and the like existed, but there was no exploitation of martial arts per se as entertainment at the time.

So, in retrospect, JUDOMASTER must be regarded as a bit of pioneering. It was not the best fighting-arts series to grace the comics pages, but it

...AND SO IT HAS COME TO PASS! THE GREATEST TEAM OF UNARMED DEFENDERS THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN, JOINS FORCES AGAINST THE MILITARISTIC LEADERS OF JAPAN! THE FUTURE OF FREEDOM IN THE ORIENT LOOKS BRIGHTER NOW AS TIGER LAUNCHES HIS CAREER ON THIS REMOTE ISLE!

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WAS the first.

The originality of the concept didn't stop there. Judomaster was a WAR series, set in the Pacific Theater of Operations during World War II. It was the only super-hero strip of the sixties to use the Big One as a background for costumed heroics (excepting Captain America's war stories in TALES OF SUSPENSE #63-71). And, rather than taking on a "safe" foe like the Nazis, Charlton's karate king confined his efforts to slapping down Japanese! In 1965, THIS folks, was playing with fire!

The origin story was presented in the final issue of a war-showcase title called SPECIAL WAR SERIES. The scene: a small, Japanese-occupied island in the South Pacific. The villainous Major Yoku has eliminated American forces in the area down to two survivors. The only Yankees still at large, Sgt. Rip Jagger (familiar name, that) and an unnamed PFC, await the inevitable showdown in the jungle. A "slight figure" draws the unnerved private's fire. Jagger rescue's the victim, but his good intentions prove to be ill-timed; a squad of Japanese soldiers home in on the gunfire and capture the private.

At this point, the cavalry arrives in the form of a squad of bokken-swinging natives who take the field and beat the daylights out of the better-equipped soldiers. Jagger is taken into the guerrilla's fold, having demonstrated his valor, fighting prowess and bravery. The fact that his wounded charge turns out to be their chief's granddaughter also helps.

The leader of the resistance proves to be an aged Sensei who rules his pupils from a throne room within a cave. The cavern doubles as a dojo, where the old man and his deputy, Bushuri, train the underground in the martial arts. "Against (the Japanese) we have only our hands, our yawara, and our courage! But these are enough... if we study very hard!" (And eat Wheaties three times a day, no doubt!)

Predictably, Rip Jagger becomes the Sensei's prize pupil, masters the dreaded secrets of Karate, Judo and Jiu-Jitsu to perfection, and takes out about twenty Jap soldiers with his bare knucks in a surprise raid. "You have become a symbol of freedom to our oppressed people!" confides the Sensei. "But you must be a symbol our people can recognize... I have devised appropriate attire!"

Recognition was no problem whatsoever with the new outfit. It was the loudest set of duds any mid-sixties super-hero ever got stuck with. For starters, Jagger's hair was tied into a topknot which protruded from the top of his headmask. ("If some of the girls back in the States could see me now...") The costume itself was standard super-hero issue in red and yellow, with a "rising sun" motif on the chest, pajama pants and slippers, and a black judo belt around his waist. Hardly the sort of thing one expected to see a

[Continued on page 51]

TCR Top 100 Comic Books

This mo.	Last mo.	Title, Number Publisher, Special Features, Format, Price if not 50c/60c	No. sold
1	1	THE UNCANNY X-MEN No. 152 Marvel	6091
2	4	THE NEW TEEN TITANS No. 14 DC	3700
3	7	DAREDEVIL No. 177 Marvel	3335
4	2	FANTASTIC FOUR No. 237 Marvel	3055
5	8	IRON MAN No. 153 Marvel	3011
6	16	DAZZLER No. 10 Marvel	2982
7	9	MOON KNIGHT No. 14 Marvel	2950
8	6	THE AVENGERS No. 214 Marvel	2925
9	6*	THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL No. 15 Marvel; Spider-Man and Punisher; 48 pages; 75c	2902
10	14	THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN No. 223 Marvel	2695
11	13	KA-ZAR THE SAVAGE No. 9 Marvel	2689
12	22*	DOCTOR STRANGE No. 50 Marvel; Sgt. Fury guest-star	2675
13	12	ROM No. 25 Marvel-Parker Bros., 48 pages, 75c	2670
14	11*	WHAT IF? No. 30 Marvel, What if Spider-Man's Clone Lived?; 48 pages; 75c	2663
15	11	MICRONAUTS No. 36 Marvel-Mego	2608
16	19	PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN No. 61 Marvel	2479
17	19*	KING CONAN No. 8 Marvel-Robert E. Howard, 48 pages, 75c	2348
18	15	ALL-STAR SQUADRON No. 4 DC	2321
19	18	STAR WARS No. 54 Marvel-Lucasfilms	2258
20	25	THOR No. 314 Marvel	2230
21	17	ARAK/SON OF THUNDER No. 4 DC	2197
22	29	CAPTAIN AMERICA No. 264 Marvel	2183
23	167	CAPTAIN VICTORY AND HIS GALACTIC RANGERS No. 2 Pacific; $1.00	2128
24	23	MARVEL TEAM-UP No. 112 Marvel; Spider-Man and Dr. Strange, with King Kull	2125
25	22	THE DEFENDERS No. 102 Marvel	2112
26	27	CONAN THE BARBARIAN No. 129 Marvel-Robert E. Howard	2062
27	28	MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE No. 82 Marvel, Thing, Captain America and Giant-Man	2017
28	30	JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA No. 197 DC	1937
29	31	WARLORD No. 52 DC	1932
30	32	THE INCREDIBLE HULK No. 266 Marvel	1766
31	39*	SPIDER-WOMAN No. 41 Marvel	1734
32	36	POWER MAN AND IRON FIST No. 76 Marvel	1718
33	33	THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES No. 282 DC	1673
34	--	DC SPECIAL SERIES No. 27 DC, reprints; Batman and the Hulk; $2.50	1669
35	34	THE SAVAGE SHE-HULK No. 23 Marvel	1629
36	36	MASTER OF KUNG FU No. 107 Marvel	1628
37	44*	STAR TREK No. 17 Marvel-Paramount	1626
38	40	BATMAN No. 342 DC	1545
39	10*	BIZARRE ADVENTURES No. 28 Marvel; Unlikely heroes, black and white magazine; $1.25	1516
40	38	THE SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN No. 70 Marvel; black and white magazine, $1.25	1492
41	39	GREEN LANTERN No. 147 DC	1417
42	37	DC COMICS PRESENTS No. 40 DC; Superman and Metamorpho	1463
43	41	DETECTIVE COMICS No. 509 DC	1350
44	43	THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD No. 181 DC, Batman and Hawk and the Dove	1235
45	47	THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY No. 24 DC	1204
46	44	ACTION COMICS No. 526 DC	1167
47	45	THE FLASH No. 304 DC	1151
48	42	GHOST RIDER No. 63 Marvel	1133
49	46	SUPERMAN No. 366 DC	1127
50	46*	THE SPIRIT No. 30 Kitchen Sink; black and white magazine, $2.00	1101
51	48	WONDER WOMAN No. 286 DC	1082
52	49	ADVENTURE COMICS PRESENTS DIAL "H" FOR HERO No. 488 DC	1002
53	--	SPIDER-MAN AND HIS AMAZING FRIENDS No. 1 Marvel	830
54	35	DENNIS THE MENACE No. 2 Marvel-Field	829
55	51	HEAVY METAL No. 55 [VSP7] HM; color magazine, $2.00	806
56	52	WORLD'S FINEST COMICS No. 274 DC, 48 pages; $1.00	731
57	53	THE SUPERMAN FAMILY No. 213 DC; 48 pages, $1.00	577
58	57	DC SPECIAL BLUE-RIBBON DIGEST No. 16 DC; Green Lantern reprints, digest; 95c	567
59	55	MARVEL TALES STARRING SPIDER-MAN No. 134 Marvel, reprints	552
60	56	JONAH HEX No. 55 DC	490
61	50	THE BEST OF DC No. 19 DC, Imaginary Superman reprints, digest; 95c	410
62	61	MARVEL SUPER-HEROES No. 104 Marvel, Hulk reprints, last issue	387
63	72*	SGT. FURY No. 167 Marvel, reprints; last issue	343
64	73	G.I. COMBAT No. 236 DC; 48 pages; $1.00	305
65	65	SGT. ROCK No. 359 DC	236
66	70	SECRETS OF HAUNTED HOUSE No. 43 DC	226
67	66	UNKNOWN SOLDIER No. 258 DC	222
68	63	THE UNEXPECTED No. 217 DC	214
69	67	HOUSE OF MYSTERY No. 299 DC	209
70	69	GHOSTS No. 107 DC	201
71	71	WEIRD WAR TALES #1- 106 DC	198
72	68	EERIE No. 126 Warren, black and white magazine, $2.00	147
73	75 *	WARREN PRESENTS No. 14 Warren, black and white magazine; $2.00, Rex Havoc	142
74	74	CRAZY MAGAZINE No. 80 Marvel; black and white magazine, 75c	102
75	--	CONDORMAN No. 1 Whitman-Walt Disney	83
76	77 *	UNCLE SCROOGE No. 190 Whitman-Walt Disney; reprints	64
77	80 *	DONALD DUCK No. 136 Whitman-Walt Disney, reprints	57
78	79	COMICS AND STORIES No. 492 Whitman-Walt Disney; half reprints	54
79	95*	MAD Magazine No. 226 EC; black and white magazine, 90c	42
80	94*	TOM AND JERRY No. 338 Whitman-Gerry Lewis reprints	31
81	93*	RICHIE RICH AND HIS GIRL FRIENDS No. 12 Harvey	24
82	81*	RICHIE RICH SUCCESS STORIES No. 101 Harvey	23
83	98*	BUGS BUNNY No. 216 Whitman-Warner Bros.	22
84	86	RICHIE RICH No. 299 Harvey	22
85	91*	RICHIE RICH GEMS No. 39 Harvey	22
86	85*	RICHIE RICH JACKPOTS No. 55 Harvey	22
87	89*	SAD SACK AND THE SARGE No. 152 Harvey	22
88	--	PORKY PIG No. 103 Whitman-Warner Bros.	21
89	--	POPEYE THE SAILOR No. 161 Whitman-King Features	20
90	88*	RICHIE RICH DOLLARS AND CENTS No. 104 Harvey	9
91	84*	RICHIE RICH MILLIONS No. 109 Harvey	19
92	96*	RICHIE RICH VAULTS OF MYSTERY No. 43 Harvey	18
93	98*	DAFFY DUCK No. 136 Whitman-Warner Bros.	16
94	92*	LAUGH COMICS DIGEST No. 37 Archie; digest; 95c	16
95	--	WOODY WOODPECKER No. 195 Whitman-Walter Lantz	15
96	--	BETTY AND VERONICA ANNUAL DIGEST No. 2 Archie, digest; 95c	14
97	99*	JUGHEAD WITH ARCHIE COMICS DIGEST No. 47 Archie; digest; 95c	13
98	90*	ARCHIE No. 310 Archie	12
99	94*	ARCHIE, ARCHIE ANDREWS, WHERE ARE YOU DIGEST No. 20 Archie	12
100	98*	ARCHIE'S GIRLS, BETTY AND VERONICA No. 311 Archie (Charles not on last month's survey)	12

PARTICIPATING SHOPS Aardvarks, Albinos and Aliens Comics, Westport, NY; Alpha-Omega Comic and Trading Card Co., Fresno, CA; B&D Buyer Service, Moneta, VA Benders, Hampton, VA; Bill and Bob's Comic Store, Brooklyn, NY; Bob's Comics, Lawndale, CA; Bookie Parrar, Dayton, OH; The Book Nook, Champaign, IL; The Collector's Corner, Grand Rapids, MI; Comic Carnival and Nostalgia Emporium, Indianapolis, IN; Comic City, Minneapolis, MN; Comic Kingdom, Chicago, IL; The Comic Rack, Spokane, WA; The Comic Store, Lancaster, PA; Curious Book Shop, East Lansing, MI; Elde's Comix, SF and Records, Pittsburgh, PA; Fabulous Fiction Book Store, Worcester, MA; Fantastic Worlds Book Store, Fort Worth, TX; Golden Fleece Magazines, Cleveland, OH; King's Komix Kastle, Bowie, ID; Larry's Comic Store, Chicago, IL; The Paperback Junction, Cincinnati, OH; Starship Enterprises, Hollywood, FL; Super Universe, Cambridge, MA; The Turning Page, Milwaukee, WI RTC Comics Ltd., Colorado Springs, CO; Eide's Comix, SF and Records, Pittsburgh, PA; Graphic Arts Comic Shop, Charlottesville, VA.
WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SURVEY? Write for the necessary forms to: SURVEY, POST OFFICE BOX 255, MENOMONEE FALLS, WI 53051

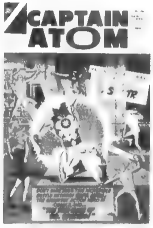
FANDOM CONFIDENTIAL

with Jim Engel & Chuck Fiala

this month:

RECAPPING THE NEWS (AND RE-CYCLING THE PICTURES)

CARL BARKS FANS WILL HAVE SOMETHING TO LOOK FOR IN COMING MONTHS, PROMPTED BY LESS THAN ENTHUSIASTIC RESPONSE TO HIS "FAMOUS FIGURES OF HISTORY" AS THEY MIGHT HAVE LOOKED HAD THEIR GENES "GOTTEN MIXED UP WITH WATERFOWL" SERIES, ("GENERAL OF WARS" WHERE IN FACT CHOSHED BY GILL WARS) MR. BARKS THINKS HE MIGHT HAVE FOUND A WAY TO RETURN TO PAINTING SCENES FROM HIS WORK WITHOUT INCURRING THE WRATH OF THE DISNEY EMPIRE. THE NEW CONCEPT IS THAT OF PAINTED SCENES FROM BARKS' FAMOUS DONALD DUCK + UNCLE SCROOGE STRIPS, WITH THE ONLY DIFFERENCE BEING...
...THAT THE DUCKS' COSTUMES WILL BE EMPTY. TO QUOTE MR. BARKS, "THEY ONLY OWN THE CHARACTERS, SEE?" NOT THEIR CLOTHES! SO WHAT'S GOTTA DO IS JUST THINK OF THE DUCKS AS GASS! 'CAUSE IF THEY WERE GASS (A CONCEPT SEE 6M) IT'D JUST BE THEIR CLOTHES HANGIN' THERE, YA GET IT? THAT'S THE ONLY DIFFERENCE! GASES! GREAT, HUH?" THE FIRST PAINTINGS IN THE SERIES WILL BE A RE-CREATION OF DELL 4-COLOR #386, WHICH WILL BE RE-TITLED "ONLY A POOR OLD FAINT"
ALL YOU COLLECTORS OF LIMITED EDITION ART PORTFOLIOS WILL BE EXCITED TO LEARN THAT SCHWARTZ-SCHWARTZ, FAMOUSLY LARGEST PRODUCER OF PORTFOLIOS WILL SOON BE INCLUDING A PIECE OF GUM IN EACH PACKAGE. A SPOKESMAN FOR THE COMPANY ALSO INFORMS US THAT LIMITED EDITION PRINTS, WHICH CLOTHES PLACED TO THE SERIES OF SOUR BUBBLE GUM, "JUST LIKE A REAL MATRIX!"
PICTOR LEE MARVUM HAS BEEN SIGNED FOR THE LEAD ROLE IN FRANTIGRAPHICS FILMS UPCOMING MOTION PICTURE, "HIS NAME IS KRAUE." THE FILM BIOGRAPHY OF A COMIC BOOK ARTIST WHO ALWAYS DRAWS THOSE FUNNY LITTLE TEAR DROP SHAPED THINGS UNDER THE NOSES OF HIS CHARACTERS. THE FILMS DIRECTOR, SAM PECKINGARM, PROMISES PLENTY OF ACTION, AND LOTS OF BLOOD DRIPPING FROM THOSE FUNNY LITTLE TEAR DROP SHAPED THINGS UNDER THE NOSES OF THE CHARACTERS.
FANDOM CONFIDENTIAL HAS RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING PRESS RELEASE MARKED "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE"... "DEAN MYLLARD'S EDITING OF ECLIPSE / AND C.A. WHITE'S NEW YORK WINDOW, BUCKEYE GLOBE COLUMNIST AND FREELANCE WRITER, ANNOUNCED THEIR BETROTHAL ON DECEMBER 21ST, 1981. THE HAPPY COUPLE PLANS AN ON-STAGE WEDDING AT THE 1982 CHICNO CONVICON IN JULY, ...
...WHERE THEY WILL EXCHANGE TOKENS OF MUTUAL AFFECTION IN A BUBBLE BUT MOVING CEREMONY TO BE HELD INSIDE A SPECIALLY CONSTRUCTED SEVEN BY TEN FOOT MYLAR™ SAUSAGE. "I ALWAYS USE MYLAR™ TO PROTECT MY VALUABLES," SAYS SPRUWOOD. ADDS MULLARKEY, "IT LASTS LONGER AND DOESN'T DISCOLOR UNDER HEAVY USE."
DC PLANS TO UNVEIL TOO REVISION BOOKS IN THE NEAR FUTURE. TEEN-AGE HUMOR STAR "BUNKY" WILL BE BROUGHT BACK IN A SERIES WHICH BEGINS WITH BUNKY WORKING IN A MALT SHOP, WHERE A BLENDER EXPLOSION, PERMANENTLY DISFIGURING HIS FACE WRAPPING HIS HEAD IN GAUZE BANDAGES. HE CONTINUES HIS LIVELY ESCAPADES AS THE UNKNOWN "SODA JERK."
THE NEUEST ADVERSARIES OF JERRY LEWIS," WILL NOT BE PLAYED (AS IN THE PAST) FOR LAUGHS, BUT WILL ATTEMPT A SERIOUS PORTRAYAL OF LEWIS'S CAREER. IN COMIC BOOK FORM. IT JERRY IS SETTO PLAY A BURGER CUT OF MEDAN WHO WAS NEVER FUNNY IN THE FIRST PLACE BUT WHO THEN SOME MYSTERIOUS FORCE CAUSED PEOPLE TO LAUGH AT. HE WORKS HARDER, IN THE U.S., IN AN ATTEMPT TO GET PEOPLE TO MAKE THAT SUPREME GESTURE OF CHARITY — WATCHING HIM PERFORM COMIC RELIEF. COMES IN THE FORM OF "DEAN," A SEAGULL. JERRY DEMONSTRATES AFTER IT ACCIDENTALLY GETS CAUGHT IN HIS HAIR.
I'M CRAZY ABOUT THESE GUYS! OOPS!! I MEAN MAD!!
THE POWERS THAT BE AT DC HAVE DECIDED A RIGHT CHANGE IN THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE DC UNIVERSE. EFFECTIVE WITH THE NEXT ISSUES OF THEIR RESPECTIVE BOOKS, THE MUMETEERS, BLACK CANARY, POWER GIRL, WILDFIRE, ATOMAN + ANTOMIC JOKARTON WILL BE RESIDENTS OF A NEW PARALLEL WORLD WHICH WILL BE REFERRED TO AS "EARTH TWO!"
WARDELL PUBLISHING HAS LICENSED A NEW ITEM FEATURING OUR OWN CHARACTERS. THE "WARDELLA PARTY DOLL" IS A LIFE-SIZE INFLATABLE REPLICA OF THE WARDELL VAMPIRESS THAT'S SO POPULAR WITH ADOLESCENT BOYS AND RETARDED ADULTS. IT IS COMPLETE WITH A REMOVABLE COSTUME AND BOB-OFF BAT TATTOOS. PLUS IS AVAILABLE BY MAIL TO ANYONE UNDER 18. PERSONS OVER 18 MAY ALSO OBTAIN THE DOLL IF THEY INCLUDE THE WRITTEN PERMISSION OF THEIR PARENTS. THEY PROBABLY STILL LIVE WITH.
AND FINALLY... TRAGEDY STRUCK AT THE TORONTO COMICON LAST WEEK-END. GUEST ARTISTS DAVE STEVENS AND FRANK MILLER WERE DEMONSTRATING THEIR SKILLS BEFORE AN AUDIENCE WHEN THE UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT OCCURRED. HAVING EACH PENCILLED A SAMPLE COMIC PAGE, THEY BEGAN TO DEMONSTRATE EMBELLISHING TECHNIQUES...
HOWEVER, WHEN THE TWO MEN ATTEMPTED TO INK THE PAGES, THE HIGH VOLUME OF BLACK INDIA INK FLOODED THE CONVENTION CENTER, LEAVING 45 CONVENTION GUESTS DRAINED, AND STAN + MILLER HOSPITALIZED IN SERIOUS CONDITION. STAN'S WIFE AND PUBLISHER, DEAN STAN, UNFORTUNATELY IS THAT BOTH MEN HAVE HAD THEIR LUNGS AND STOMACHES PUMPED, AND ARE BEING FED HUGE DOSES OF "SOD-PRIVE" INTRAVENOUSLY. GET WELL SOON, YOU GUYS! SEE YA NEXT TIME!
TIMMY'S IN TROUBLE!



FILLER: Judomaster's Favorite Throws (2) Frank McLaughlin (story/art); editorial (1)

83, November 1966 Cover: Steve Ditko/Rocke Mastroserio
**"Finally Falls the Mighty" (18)
Story: Steve Ditko/Dave Kaler Art: Steve Ditko/Rocke Mastroserio
Blue Beetle "The Blue Beetle" Part 1 (7)
Story: Steve Ditko/Gary Friedrich Art: Steve Ditko
FILLER: letters (1)

84, January 1967 Cover: Steve Ditko/Rocke Mastroserio
**"After the Fall a New Beginning" (18)
Story: Dave Kaler/Steve Ditko Art: Steve Ditko/Rocke Mastroserio
Blue Beetle "The Blue Beetle" Part 2 (7)
Story: Steve Ditko/Gary Friedrich Art: Steve Ditko
FILLER: letters (1)

85, March 1967 Cover: Steve Ditko/Rocke Mastroserio
**"Strings of Punch and Jewles" (18)
Story: Dave Kaler/Steve Ditko Art: Steve Ditko/Rocke Mastroserio
Blue Beetle "The Blue Beetle" (7)
Story: Steve Ditko/Gary Friedrich Art: Steve Ditko
FILLER: letters (1)

86, June 1967 Cover: Steve Ditko/Rocke Mastroserio
**"The Fury of the Faceless Foe" (18)
Story: Dave Kaler/Steve Ditko Art: Steve Ditko/Rocke Mastroserio
Blue Beetle "The Blue Beetle" Part 4 (7)
Story: Steve Ditko/Gary Friedrich Art: Steve Ditko
FILLER: letters (1)

87, August 1967 Cover: Steve Ditko/Rocke Mastroserio
**"The Menace of the Fiery-Icer" (18)
Story: Dave Kaler/Steve Ditko Art: Steve Ditko/Rocke Mastroserio
Nightshade "The Image's Idyl" (7)
Story: Dave Kaler Art: Jim Aparo
FILLER: letters (1)

88, October 1967 Cover: Steve Ditko/Frank McLaughlin
**"Ravage of Ronthor" (18)
Story: Dave Kaler/Steve Ditko Art: Steve Ditko/Frank McLaughlin
Nightshade "Poetry of Peril" (7)
Story: Dave Kaler Art: Jim Aparo
FILLER: letters (1)

89, December 1967 Cover: Steve Ditko/Frank McLaughlin
**"Captain Atom Meets Thirteen" (18)
Story: Dave Kaler/Steve Ditko Art: Steve Ditko/Frank McLaughlin
Nightshade "Masque of Mirrors" (7)
Story: Dave Kaler Art: Jim Aparo
FILLER: letters (1)

SPECIAL WAR SERIES
Starring Judomaster

Volume 4
4, November 1965 Cover: Frank McLaughlin
**"Introducing Rip Jagger...Judomaster" (2: "The Dojo"; 3: "Judomaster is Born") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Frank McLaughlin
Sarge Steel "Sport of Judo" (3)
Story/art: Frank McLaughlin
FILLER: text (1)

JUDOMASTER
Volume 6 (formerly GUNMASTER)

[Continued from page 47]

World War II G.I. fight Japs in, but that's super-heroin'! The remainder of the tale allowed Judomaster to wipe out the enemy base in three pages. He ignited an ammo dump, signalled American bombers to make a raid, and punched out Major Yoku in the final panels. All in all, quite a standard origin issue.

This story, unlike the rest of the run, was scripted by Joe Gill from a plot by Frank McLaughlin. McLaughlin wrote and drew all the other issues. Judomaster's raconteur was extremely well-versed in fighting techniques and history; besides the hero's bi-monthly books he contributed three-page judo lessons to other Charlton titles. (Later on, in the seventies, McLaughlin would perform the same function for Marvel's DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU.) The combat scenes were as accurate as any to be found in comics.

McLaughlin's art in the initial JUDOMASTER strip was only competent, far from inspired. His style (inspired by Dick Giordano, whom he'd assisted prior to the book) improved considerably with the second issue some six months later. Still, most of his panels remained as static as PAM's, until the inevitable judo fight of the issue came up. Punches, chops, kicks, throws and judo grips were rendered in full-figure scenes with more style than any other Charlton title offered. The action could continue for seven consecutive pages...and beyond! (On occasion, Judomaster wasn't above Saturday-night-wrestling brutality; he once beat the brutish Mountain Storm by nearly breaking the villain's back over his knee. Shades of Doctor Wertham!) And whenever full-page scenes appeared, they put the rest of the book to shame. The well-done splash for #98 attests for that.

Scripting quality matched that of the art. They weren't exactly Will Eisner material, but at least they held up in the hero-versus-villain department. Dialogue was held to a simplistic level ("Oh, Rip, if I could only tell you how glad my heart is to see you once again!") Principals were stereotyped: unflawed American generals, villainous Japs, a devoted female lead and a clean-living hero with a kid sidekick. It could have been taken from a 1940s Hollywood war flick.

But however his execution may have faltered, McLaughlin was full of surprises. Each issue of JUDOMASTER threw the reader a curve with a different plot gimmick. By the second issue (which took over the numbering of the defunct GUNMASTER) Rip Jagger had somehow made it back to an American base, revealed his secret identity to one General Hawkins and become the latter's special operative. The third issue contained the most interesting twist of all. In order to signal Hawkins that a Jap super-missile had been destroyed, Judomaster had to make a special broadcast in code. Said broadcast was an anti-American propaganda speech, done under the auspices of Tokyo Rose! The truth was never revealed. The masked man became a traitor to the public eye and the next story was headlined, "JUDOMASTER... Man Without a Country!"

The next episode produced Charlton's first (and last) kid sidekick. (Unless you count Gunmaster's crony Bullet the Gun Boy.) Tiger, who became the Scarlet Smasher's "robin," entered the storyline as a Japanese-American youth in a Wyoming relocation camp. (This was probably the touchiest subject ever handled by the series, doubly so during the Vietnam era. "You know the government has had a problem with Japanese-Americans," confessed General Hawkins. "It's all pretty embarrassing... We're at war with their homeland so we are forced to put them in 'relocation camps' for the duration!" That was as far as Charlton dared go in broaching the subject. But no other company of that era even intimated their existence, so it was a progression of SOME sort.) The boy passed along vital information to a spy/bokken-artist named the Cat by stashing papers inside hollow chopsticks. (What subterfuge!) When the pair are confronted by Jagger, Tiger boasts, "Even your mighty Judomaster would be no match for the Cat!"

Them proved to be fightin' words, as Judomaster closed in combat with the staff-wielding Cat. Naturally, the villain couldn't be expected to fight any way except foully, and his unfair battle tactics cause Tiger to become a Judomaster booster. And just in time, too. One page later, the hero pitched the baddie off a cliff! So much for that bit of hero-worship.

A later battle results in Judomaster's temporary blindness, touching off a Spider-Man-style bout of depression. The downcast Tiger, seeing a second idol shattered, rushes off to take the Sensei's special crash super-hero/karate course and emerges as a costumed pint-sized JUDOKA. The newly-inspired Judomaster takes the boy under his wing (couldn't you have guessed?) and the duo beat up on Japanese villains for the remainder of the series, happily ever after.

The villains were inevitably martial artists with a gimmick. The Mountain Storm, a modified Sumo wrestler with the smarts of a Mack truck, came on strong for three separate issues. The Cat, already mentioned, punched in for one appearance. The Smiling Skull was an old Sarge Steel villain who learned karate during his Nazi stint in the '40s. And the Acrobat, brother to Judomaster's guerrilla sweetheart, was an All-Japanese Boy who was driven by a simple love of country to fight the Allies. (THAT'S something you didn't see too much of in 1960s war comics.) The last two issues attempted to break out of the dojo scene by pitting Judomaster against a crooked boxer and an island chock-full of dinosaurs. A karate-chop being a weapon of limited use against a Tyrannosaurus, the obligatory Japanese mastermind and soldiers were added to liven up the last story.

Not much needs to be said about the Judomaster series. It was satisfying in the manner of a Hershey bar, entertainment in quickie fashion. There were several innovations in the series, but these were inevitably blunted by medi-

89, June 1966 Cover: Frank McLaughlin
***"Prisoner of War" (2: "The Mountain Storm") (20)
Story/art: Frank McLaughlin
FILLER: Self Defense (3) Frank McLaughlin (story/art); text (1)

90, August 1966 Cover: Frank McLaughlin
***Judomaster...Traitor" (2: "Tokyo Express") (20)
Story/art: Frank McLaughlin
Thunderbolt "The Roof of the World -- Where Thunderbolt Was Born" (2)
Story/art: Peter Morisi
FILLER: text (2)

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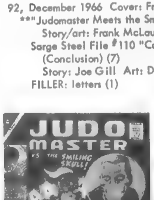
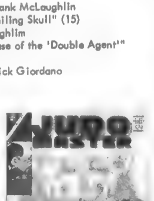
91, October 1966 Cover: Frank McLaughlin
**"Judomaster, Man Without a Country" (18)
Story/art: Frank McLaughlin
Sarge Steel File #110 "Case of the 'Double Agent'" (7)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Dick Giordano
FILLER: letter/bio of Frank McLaughlin (1)

92, December 1966 Cover: Frank McLaughlin
***Judomaster Meets the Smiling Skull!" (15)
Story/art: Frank McLaughlin
Sarge Steel File #110 "Case of the 'Double Agent'" (Conclusion) (7)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Dick Giordano
FILLER: letters (1)





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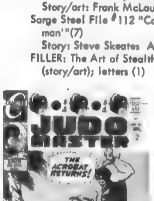
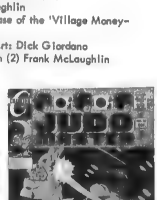
93, February 1967 Cover: Frank McLaughlin
**"Meet the Tiger" (15)
Story/art: Frank McLaughlin
Sarge Steel File #111 "Case of the 'Devil's Wife'" (7)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Dick Giordano
FILLER: The Kiai Shout (2) Frank McLaughlin (story/art); letters (2)

94, April 1967 Cover: Frank McLaughlin
**"Tiger Hunt" (16)
Story/art: Frank McLaughlin
Sarge Steel File #111 "Case of the 'Devil's Wife'" Part II (7)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Montes/Dick Giordano
FILLER: Karate Man Vs. the Bulls (2) Frank McLaughlin/Dick Giordano; letters (1)

95, June 1967 Cover: Frank McLaughlin
**"The Plot to Destroy Judomaster" (16)
Story/art: Frank McLaughlin
Sarge Steel File #112 "Case of the 'Village Moneyman'"(7)
Story: Steve Skeates Art: Dick Giordano
FILLER: The Art of Stealth (2) Frank McLaughlin (story/art); letters (1)





96, August 1967 Cover: Frank McLaughlin
**"The Final Phase of the Plot to Destory Judomaster" (17)
Story/art: Frank McLaughlin
Sarge Steel File #112 "Case of the 'Village Moneyman'" Conclusion (7)
Story: Steve Skeates Art: Dick Giordano
FILLER: letters (2)

97, October 1967 Cover: Frank McLaughlin
**"This One's For Pop" (18)
Story/art: Frank McLaughlin
Sarge Steel File #114 "Case of the 'Widow's Revenge'" (8)
Story: Steve Skeates Art: Dick Giordano
FILLER: letters (1)

98, December 1967 Cover: Frank McLaughlin
**"The Isle of Dragons" (19)
Story/art: Frank McLaughlin

ocre execution. As an action series, it worked. Under analysis, the book fails to hold up. It was neither the best nor the worst of mid-sixties super-hero series; it was simply adequate. And of course, it was the first successful martial-arts-based strip in comics. That is the only distinction JUDOMASTER deserves, or needs, in the history of super-heroes.

6. Giving Peace a Chance

THE PEACEMAKER, the fifth and final member of the Action-Hero quintet, was a good idea in the wrong hands. Had the artist been more adept, or the writing a bit less stiff, this feature might have become a really viable super-hero strip. As it was, the Peacemaker was tinged with mediocrity despite its merits.

The concept stretched credibility a bit, but at least it was original. The origin story was presented in the back-up slot of FIGHTIN' 5 #40 and #41; it was the work of Joe Gill and Pat Boyette, who would be responsible for every PEACEMAKER saga thereafter. The opening captions set forth the precepts of the series:

"This is a man who detests war, violence and the dreadful waste of human life in senseless conflicts between nations...a man who loves peace... so much so, that he is willing to fight for it!"

Christopher Smith takes the stage. His occupation: American diplomat. The situation: a brushfire war about to be touched off in South America by arms magnate Emil Bork. Smith uses every talent at his command to avert disaster, but he proves no match for Bork's terrorism, sabotage and clandestine skullduggery. Forced to the final extreme, the diplomat retreats to his home in the Swiss Alps, enters a strange room, and surveys his arsenal of self-designed weaponry. (Quite a strange hobby for an envoy to Geneva, but that's the breaks, folks.)

As Smith doffs his robe, he muses: "He must be stopped...and I cannot succeed with peaceful methods!...Although violence is against everything I stand for, there is no other solution!"

Minutes later, the Peacemaker debuts. Outfitted in a brown shirt bearing a dove emblem, along with white trousers and a plastic war helmet, the diplomat/avenger prepares for a direct strike against Bork. His uniform was completed by a jet pack and concealed weaponry, à la Iron Man. After a few indecisive encounters, the Peacemaker succeeds in foiling the war effort and guides one of Bork's anti-aircraft missiles into the villain's command ship. Chris Smith's super-heroic identity had been established.

Evidently, the management of Charlton felt that the fighting pacifist was tough enough to handle his own

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book, for THE PEACEMAKER #1 hit the stands two months later. (In fact, with THE FIGHTIN' 5 as the back-up feature, and the issues numbered Volume 3, picking up where the FF left off, it wasn't so much a new comic as a tradeoff of status emphasis.) PM endured for five issues, right up to Charlton's cancellation of its super-hero line.

PEACEMAKER was never lacking for intelligent, original plotting. Where it faltered was, like JUDOMASTER, in its execution. Boyette's art was just not strong enough to carry a headline super-hero feature. Like PAM, his characters sported one expression apiece. His action scenes were better delineated than Morisi's, but lacked the punch of Ditko or Aparo. But the stories were fairly interesting and this WAS the Age of the Super-hero, when anything in a costume at least broke even. So the Peacemaker made his fourteen-month stand.

There were no "super-villains" as such in the series. Peacemaker's foes were political in nature, "merchants of death," saboteurs, madmen with nuclear weaponry and the usual assortment of mad scientists. The stories unfolded much in the manner of a good TV adventure show (not surprisingly, since Boyette had done some movie directing in earlier days). Plotlines were believable, and Gill stuck to his conception of the character: a war-hating weapons expert who eschewed fisticuffs in favor of technological defense. The Peacemaker came off the most intellectual, tight-lipped hero in comics. Nothing short of an atomic bomb could break his cool.

But, when the chips were down, the Peacemaker didn't stand up well to his high-powered competition from Marvel, DC, Tower, Harvey, Mighty, and yes, even Charlton. Laid-back intellectual plotting that might have worked for TV's AVENGERS was out of place in the garish, sensational world of comics. And for a super-hero feature, Boyette's art was much too dull.

The Peacemaker was, indeed, a good idea. A good idea in the wrong hands at the right time. Still, he was a unique hero for his era. The Peacemaker was one of a kind, and that is how he should be remembered.

7. The Second-Banana Back-Seaters

Early on in Dick Giordano's editorship, Charlton started the policy of adding secondary super-hero back-up features to their five heroic titles. (The Derby, Connecticut post office officials, who were perfectly willing to allow Charlton a priviledge no other comics company was able to get away with -- full scale title changes while continuing numbering and second class priviledges -- insisted that the rules said that every book had to contain a filler strip which did not feature the title-named character. So every Charlton book contained a back-up feature.) Sarge Steel found a home in the back of JUDOMASTER; ditto the Fightin' 5 in PEACEMAKER. But CAPTAIN ATOM, THUNDERBOLT and BLUE BEETLE played host to original heroes as worthy of mention as the title characters themselves.

The most important of these was THE QUESTION. Drawn by Ditko and scripted by Glanzman, this faceless hero appeared in all five issues of BLUE BEETLE and a famous one-shot spin-off of his own, MYSTERIOUS SUSPENSE. The hero's only costume was a faded blue business suit and a featureless, flesh-colored mask. Thematically, he stood somewhere between the Spirit and Mister A, his close relative who debuted about this time in WITZEND. Like A, the Question's message was a simple one: good is good and evil, evil, and no compromise is possible between the two.

Exposing crime in high places was Vic Sage's job as a television reporter. Frequently, he had need to circumvent rules and regulations to get information or to see major racketeers busted. Hence, the double-identity of the Question, whose name symbolized not only his concealed features but also the choice he put before the individual: purity or corruption.

And corruption aplenty abounded in the Question's world. It was one of the truest pictures of the "real world's" lack of hard ethics and willingness to compromise that had ever been presented in commercial comics. On the side of the angels were Sage, his assistant Nora, a three-man staff, and Sam Starr, owner of World-Wide Broadcasting. Arrayed against him were Starr's sycophantic son Sid plus the rest of the network executives and society at large. There was never a story in which Ditko failed to lay it on the line, as in this example from BLUE BEETLE #1:

"The hunt for Lou Dicer continues

Sarge Steel File #115 "Case of the 'Key West Caper'" (8)
Story: Steve Skeates Art: Dick Giordano
FILLER: text (1)

THUNDERBOLT

Volume 1
1, January 1966 Cover: Peter Morisi
Frontis (1) Pat Masulli/Peter Morisi
**Special Case No. 0001 "Origin of an Avenger" (20)
Story/art: Peter Morisi
FILLER: The Mercenaries (3) Ernie Bache; text (1)

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Volume 3 (formerly SON OF VULCAN)
51, March-April 1966 Cover: Peter Morisi
**Special Case #0002 "The Evil That Is Evila" (20)
Story/art: Peter Morisi
FILLER: The Atmosphere (3) Bill Fraccio/Tony Tallarico; text (1)

52, June 1966 Cover: Peter Morisi
**Special Case #0003 "Gore, The Man-Ape" (20)
Story/art: Peter Morisi
FILLER: Judomaster's Self-Defense (3) Frank McLaughlin (story/art); text (1)

53, August 1966 Cover: Peter Morisi
**Special Case #0004 "Enter...the Tong" (20)
Story/art: Peter Morisi
FILLER: Captain Atom's Secret (2) Frank McLaughlin; letters (1)

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54, October 1966 Cover: Peter Morisi
**Special Case #0005 "This One's For Tabu" (18)
Story/art: Peter Morisi
Sentinels "Behold...the Sentinels" (7)
Story: Gray Friedrich Art: Sam Grainger
FILLER: letters (1)

55, December 1966 Cover: Peter Morisi
**Special Case #0006 "Where Stalks the Mummy?" (15)
Story/art: Peter Morisi
Sentinels "Beware...the Menacing Mind-Bender" (10)
Story: Gary Friedrich Art: Sam Grainger
FILLER: letters (1)

56, February 1967 Cover: Peter Morisi
**Special Case #0007 "Beware...the Cobra" (15)
Story/art: Peter Morisi
Sentinels "Where Walks...the Titan" (10)
Story: Gray Friedrich Art: Sam Grainger
FILLER: letters (1)

57, May 1967 Cover: Pat Boyette
***"Face of the Dragon" (15)
Story/art: Pat Boyette
Sentinels "If This Be Triumph" (10)
Story: Steve Ditko/Sam Glanzman Art: Sam Grainger
FILLER: letters (1)

58, July 1967 Cover: Peter Morisi
**Special Case #0009 "Encore: The Hooded One" (18)
Story/art: Peter Morisi
Sentinels "Into the Lair of the...Mind-Bender" (7)
Story: Denny O'Neil Art: Sam Grainger
FILLER: letters (1)

59, September 1967 Cover: Peter Morisi
***"Assassins" (18)
Story/art: Pat Boyette
[Note: pages one and two of story are reversed]
Sentinels "Night of Doom" (7)
Story: Denny O'Neil Art: Sam Grainger
FILLER: letters (1)

...and, as usual, you, the enraged public, wonders how a leech like Dicer and his ilk can thrive so readily among you! How many of you willingly support his gaming tables...or play a number daily? You don't need their kind...they need YOU! Only you can keep them in business! They can't exist without your play!... You are willing partners in Dicer's crimes!"

Whenever Sage needed answers, the Question got them. The transformation scene involved the mask, which was internally transparent, and a gas which altered the color of his suit to the light blue of the Question's "costume." (The devices were the work of one Professor Rodor, an obscure figure who made a cameo in most stories.) Whenever the hero wished to announce his presence, he flipped a card at the villains...a blank card which swiftly altered by chemical reaction to bear a question mark. (Another trait he shared with Mister A, who favored a black/white business card.) Then it was off to the races, as the Question bare-knuckled it against no less than a half-dozen thugs and always came out on top.

Whatever one may think of Ditko's simplistic philosophy, the Question was a powerful strip. In one particular scene that climaxed in issue #4, the hero kicked two attacking thugs into a raging underground river. The crooks clung desperately--and futilely -- to a pipe, begging the faceless man for help. "You're both crazy if you think I'd risk my neck to save the likes of you!" was his response. "As far as I'm concerned, you're just so much sewage! And you deserve to be right where you are!" Fade out as the two hoods are swept away to doom by the surging waters.

When the Charlton heroes made a last-gasp comeback with BLUE BEETLE #5 and MYSTERIOUS SUSPENSE #1 in 1968, the Question starred in both titles. In the former, he made a rare Charlton crossover with the Beetle. In the latter, he fronted his only book-length story. It was a grim, powerful, realistic tale, certainly one of the finest books of the sixties and one of Ditko's greatest moments.

The Question discovers that a potential sponsor has connections with organized crime and refuses his patronage. In retaliation, the magnate brings upon Sage's head the wrath that only the wealthy and powerful can command. Rumors are spread, protests are staged, and secret deals are made within the network to dethrone the newsman. Moreover, with his old sponsor withdrawing under pressure, Sage's job is on the line. Through it all, the hero refuses to bend a micron to accomodate his persecutors. Finally, the Question swings into action. The corruption is exposed, and the sponsor, who angrily shoots his underworld accomplice, is jailed. There were no costumed villains, no attempt to simplify the story to a hero-villain punch-out. It was as stark and grimly-etched as an EC entry from SHOCK SUSPENSTORIES, and could have only been done as a one-shot. But the Question had earned his place in comic-book history by it. (The Question reappeared in the mid-'70s in a fan-produced CHARLTON BULLS-EYE magazine story by Alex Toth, and co-starred in the first CHARLTON BULLSEYE comic book with the Blue Beetle.)

At the other end of the spectrum, THUNDERBOLT offered a trio of jolly misfits who alternated between super-heroics and rock stardom. The author, quite naturally, was Gary Friedrich. The team was THE SENTINELS. The threesome were a Peter, Paul and Mary-type trio who went by the name of "The Protestors"; in their initial appearance they were endowed with super-devices by a dying Russian scientist. ("You see, my name is not Jones!" It is Kolotov!") Helio, the leader, wore a belt whose properties made him lighter than air; a headband transformed the "Mary" of the group into the ESP-endowed Mentalia; and Crunch Wilson donned special gloves to become the super-powerful Brute. It was almost a retake of the THUNDER Agents as seen through Marvel-oriented eyes. Together, the group spent some six issues battling the mysterious Mind-Bender, who bit the dust in their last appearance. Art chores were handled by Sam Grainger, while Friedrich, Glanzman and Denny O'Neil did the scripting. It was a fast, fun outting of little depth, and the only time Charlton attempted to copy the style of its contemporaries.

They were replaced in the last issue of THUNDERBOLT by one of Charlton's most interesting mini-features. Fans remember THE PRANKSTER to this day, which is no small feat considering the relative obscurity of the strips' one-shot appearance. A note to readers on page one read: "You may love him, or loathe him. But we think that either way, you'll admit that he's a totally ORIGINAL super-hero concept, unlike any character you've met in the pages of this or any other comic magazine before!" And for once, truer words were never spoken.

Writer Denny O'Neil set the stage in an unspecified future era. The city named Ultropolis was an absolute tyranny, where the death penalty could be (and was) enforced for the crimes of loving, laughing, playing music, or any other form of creative expression. The action began with an execution, televised and conducted by the Prussian-like Captain Wratt. As the firing squad levels its guns, the weapons are yanked forcibly from their hands by a powerful magnet suspended from a passenger balloon stationed above. A balloon which also carries -- the Prankster!

Clad in a multi-colored uniform and sporting the biggest grin this side of the Joker, the Prankster was the image of Harlan Ellison's Harlequin. "Lose something, fellas?" he jeers to the guards and Wratt as he lassoes the intended victim and draws him into the gondola. The hero easily outdistances pursuit and makes a descent after dropping his charge off safely outside the city limits. When a pair of cops attempt the Prankster's capture, the piedpaltroon counters with laughing gas and karate-chops the giggling guardsmen into sleepland. "You fellas don't want to kill me...Wratty would much rather have me alive! He just loves those television-type shoot-'ems!"

60, November 1967 Cover: Pat Boyette
***"When Flies the Dragon" (18)
Story: Denny O'Neil Art: Pat Boyette
Prankster "The Prankster" (7)
Story: Denny O'Neil Art: Jim Aparo
FILLER: letters (1)

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THE PEACEMAKER
Volume 3 (formerly THE FIGHTIN' 5)
1, March 1967 Cover: Pat Boyette
***The Killer on the Reed" (8)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Pat Boyette
"The Hidden Power" (9)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Pat Boyette
Fightin' 5 "Ruler of Darkness" (8)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Montes/Ernie Bache
FILLER: letters/bio of Pat Boyette (1)

2, May 1967 Cover: Pat Boyette
"The Survivors" (9)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Pat Boyette
***"The Ultimatum" (8)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Pat Boyette
Fightin' 5 "The Canadian Caper" (8)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Montes/Ernie Bache
FILLER: letters/bio of Joe Gill and Ernie Bache (1)

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3, July 1967 Cover: Pat Boyette
***"Our Future World" (17)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Pat Boyette
Fightin' 5 "Special Prisoner" (8)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Montes/Ernie Bache
FILLER: letters (1)

4, September 1967, Cover: Pat Boyette
***"The Hostage" (19)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Pat Boyette

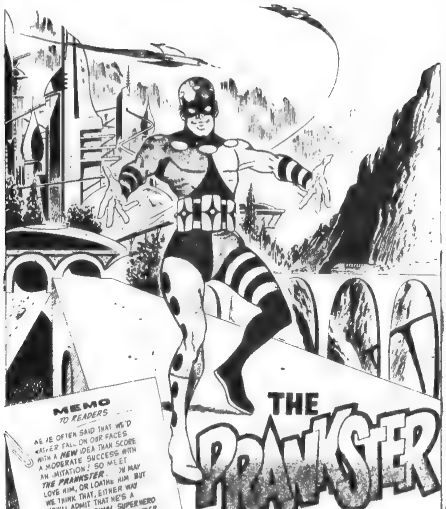
Fightin' 5 "Card Carrier" (7)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Montes/Ernie Bache
FILLER: letters (1)

5, November 1967 Cover: Pat Boyette
***"The Fire World" (18)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Pat Boyette
Fightin' 5 "The Card Carrier" (conclusion) (7)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Montes/Ernie Bache
FILLER: letters (1)

BLUE BEETLE
Volume 1
1, June 1967 Cover: Steve Ditko
***"The Blue Beetle Bugs the Squids" (18)
Story: Steve Ditko/Sam Glanzman Art: Steve Ditko
Question "Question" (7)
Story: Steve Ditko/Sam Glanzman Art: Steve Ditko
FILLER: letters (1)

2, August 1967 Cover: Steve Ditko
***"The End is a Beginning" (18)
Story: Steve Ditko/Sam Glanzman Art: Steve Ditko
Question "The Question" Part 2 (7)
Story: Steve Ditko/Sam Glanzman Art: Steve Ditko
FILLER: letters (1)

3, October 1967 Cover: Steve Ditko
***"The Madmen" (18)
Story: Steve Ditko/Sam Glanzman Art: Steve Ditko
Question "The Question" Part 3 (7)
Story: Steve Ditko/Sam Glanzman Art: Steve Ditko
FILLER: letters (1)


MEMO
TO READERS
AS WE OFTEN SAID THAT WE'D NEVER FALL ON OUR FACES WITH A NEW IDEA THAN SCORE WITH A MODERATE SUCCESS WITH AN IMITATION, SO MEET THE PRANKSTER. IN MAY WE THINK, OR LOATHE HIM BUT LOVE HIM. OR LOATHE HIM BUT WE THINK THAT EITHER WAY YOU'LL AGREE THAT HE'S A TOTALLY ORIGINAL SUPERHERO CONCEPT, UNLIKE ANY CHARACTER YOU'VE MET IN THE PAGES OF COMIC MAGAZINES BEFORE!
-DICK GIORDANO - EDITOR
SERGIUS O'SHAUGHNESSY - WRITER
JIM APARO - ARTIST
THE PRANKSTER
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Think that the zaniness stops there? The scene shifts to the palace of Bane, Ultropolis's tyrant ruler, a bald, corpulent ninny who missed the cast-call for DR. STRANGELOVE. His one love is the female-type computer console, which throws a tantrum when Wratt suggests using it for police work. Accordingly, Bane forces Wratt to apologize whilst prostrating himself and kissing the computer's "feet." ("That's better!" chortles Bane. "See that it doesn't happen again, Captain!")

The Prankster comes into focus on the next page; his personality and motivations are delineated in six brief panels. In his subterranean lair, accompanied by his Einstein-like co-conspirator Hiram Grave, the Prankster's mask drops:

"And I often feel like weeping...when I think of what's happened to us... to our city...all our hopes being destroyed by that maniac Bane! With our technical knowledge, Ultropolis could be a paradise! Instead...look! Love, laughter, art, everything that lends dignity to human beings outlawed! People made to work like animals...slaves to Bane, and his dream of power!"

Such style, in years to come, would form the basis for the acclaimed GREEN LANTERN/GREEN ARROW series at DC. But O'Neil developed his talents before then at Charlton.

At the climax of the seven-page epic, the Prankster is captured by another pair of policemen who rip away his "senior citizen" disguise. "Since you probably won't believe it if I tell you that I'm an old man disguised as the Prankster disguised as an old man... yep, that's me!" replies the embattled good guy. A gun is leveled at his head. At this point, the episode ends, with a promise that the Prankster will return next ish with "The Vengeance of a Wratt!"

Alas, such was not the case. THUNDERBOLT folded with that issue, and the fate of the Prankster was never revealed. But only the faithless dare suggest that the harlequin-hero met doom after that issue. Somewhere in an alternate future, the Prankster still lives, laughs and plots a mirthful revolution against his particular Status Quo.

Nightshade and the Blue Beetle, who shared back-up status in CAPTAIN ATOM, have been dealt with in earlier sections of this article. But the second issue of CHARLTON PREMIERE (numbered Volume 2, Number 1; it had been preceded by an otherwise ordinary issue of MARINE WAR HEROES which simply used the CHARLTON PREMIERE logo) showcased a trio of new super-hero features, and each was so extraordinary that there was no place to feature it except in an offbeat trial issue. PREMIERE #1, subtitled "Trio," was their first and last appearance, and each deserves a mention here:

THE SHAPE, about the closest anyone has ever gotten to a second-generation Jack Cole Plastic Man, was an android with an IQ in low double digits who possessed elastic powers. He was played for laughs by author artist Grass Green. Accompanied by a kid sidekick, the plastoid-paragon merrily assumed the shapes of a basketball, a machete, a living lasso, a horse (with wings, yet) and even a convertible to foil a spy plot within seven pages. (Through each transformation, like Plastic Man, the uniform and insignia were clearly identifiable.) It was witty, wacky and deserving of continuation.

THE TYRO TEAM, written by Steve Skeates and drawn by Bill Montes and Ernie Bache, was an attempt to show what would REALLY happen to a trio of college students who decided to become costumed crime-busters; i.e. a lot of close shaves with cheap thugs, little sleep and study time, grade problems, cancelled dates, in-group friction and general trouble. Compared to the Tyros, Spider-Man was as far removed from reality as the Jabberwocky. It was well-written and superbly-plotted, but in the super-charged comic book hero world the Tyro Team would probably never have stood a chance. (But a full-length Tyro tryout issue HAD been planned for the never-published fifth issue of CHARLTON PREMIERE.)

THE SPOOKMAN was the third and final feature of PREMIERE #1, written and drawn by Pat Boyette. Our hero, a museum curator named Aaron Piper, was transformed by a Moonstone Amulet into a creature who resembled the Phantom of the Opera in Puritan garb. His schtick was time-travel, with the initial story set in Nero's Rome. Boyette's art seemed to convey the atmosphere of antiquity well, and the script was tongue-in-cheek and quite interesting. Of the three, the Spookman was probably the most commercially viable.

In their back-feature super-strips, the Charlton creators generally pulled

4, December 1967 Cover: Steve Ditko
**"The Men of the Mask" (18)
Story: Steve Ditko/Sam Glanzman Art: Steve Ditko
Question "Kill Vic Sage" (8)
Story: Steve Skeates Art: Steve Ditko
FILLER: letters (1)

5, November 1968 Cover: Steve Ditko
**"The Blue Beetle Faces the Destroyer of Heroes" (18)
Story: Steve Ditko/Sam Glanzman Art: Steve Ditko
Question "The Question" Part 5 (8)
Story: Steve Ditko/Sam Glanzman Art: Steve Ditko
FILLER: text (1)

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CHARLTON PREMIERE

Volume 1 (formerly MARINE WAR HEROES)
19, July 1967 Cover: Rocke Mastroserio
"The Devil Dogs of Chateau Thierry" (8)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Marcos Adan
"What Makes a Marine?" (1)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Charles Nicholas/Vince Alascia
"Bandage Brigade" (6)
Story: Dave Kaler Art: Charles Nicholas/Vince Alascia
"The Darkness of War" (3)
Story: Dave Kaler Art: Charles Nicholas/Frank McLaughlin
"The Sniper" (7)
Story: Willi Franz Art: Charles Nicholas/Vince Alascia
FILLER: text (1)

Volume 2
1, September 1967 Cover: Grass Green/Frank McLaughlin, Rocke Mastroserio, Pat Boyette "TRIO"
"The Shape" (7)
Story/pencils: Grass Green Inks: Frank McLaughlin
"Introducing...the Tyro Team" (10)
Story: Steve Skeates Art: Bill Montes/Ernie Bache
"The Spookman" (8)
Story: Pat Boyette
FILLER: editorial (1)

2, November 1967 Cover: Pat Boyette
**"Children of Doom" (25)
Story: Denny O'Neil Art: Pat Boyette
FILLER: letters (1)

3, January 1968 Cover: Henry Scarpelli
**Sinestro, Boy Fiend "Too Many Happy Endings" (2: "Sinestro and the Superguys"; 3: "Sinestro's Evil Triumph") (27)
Story: ? Art: Henry Scarpelli
FILLER: letters (1)

4, May 1968 Cover: UNLIKELY TALES by Rocke Mastroserio
Frontis (1) Rocke Mastroserio
"Expedition" (9)
Story/art: Pat Boyette
"The Presence" (3)
Art: Rocke Mastroserio/Frank McLaughlin
"The Insignificant Man" (7)
Story: Steve Skeates Art: Jim Aparo
"The Time Machine" (7)
Story/art: Steve Ditko
FILLER: letters (1)

MYSTERIOUS SUSPENSE

Volume 1
1, October 1968 Cover: Steve Ditko
Frontis (1) Rocke Mastroserio
**The Question "What Makes a Hero?" (25)
Story: Steve Ditko/Sam Glanzman Art: Steve Ditko
FILLER: text (1)

In 1977/78, Modern Promotions of New York reissued sixty Charltons in plastic bag distribution. Included in these were exact reprints (save ads, dates and cover emblem) of BLUE BEETLE #1,3, CAPTAIN ATOM #83,84, 86, JUDOMASTER #93,94,96,98, THE PEACEMAKER #1, 2 and THUNDERBOLT #57,58.

SPACE ADVENTURES

Volume 2 [Reprinting the entirety of the Steve Ditko Captain Atom stories from SPACE ADVENTURES]
9, May 1978 Cover: Steve Ditko
"Captain Atom" (9) from S.A. #33
"The Second Man In Space" (7) from S.A. #34
"The Crisis" (7) from S.A. #40

10, August 1978 Cover: Steve Ditko
"Backfire" (5) from S.A. #38
"The Little Wanderer" (5) from S.A. #35
"One Second of War" (5) from S.A. #38
"The Force Beyond" (5) from S.A. #38

11, October 1978 Cover: Steve Ditko
"The Wreck of X-44" (5) from S.A. #36
"The Space Prowlers" (5) from S.A. #37
"Captain Atom on Planet X" (5) from S.A. #36
"A Victory For Venus" (5) from S.A. #37

12, January 1979 Cover: Steve Ditko
"The Boy and the Stars" (5) from S.A. #40
"An Ageless Weapon" (5) from S.A. #39
"Test Pilot's Nightmare" (5) from S.A. #39
"The Silver Lady From Venus" (5) from S.A. #42

more imaginative strokes than in their headliners. The Question, the Prankster and the Tyro Team have each earned as much notoriety as their five frontliners, and justly so. It would be interesting to have seen which would have stayed, and which would have fallen by the wayside, had the Action-Hero era continued past 1968.

8. Summing Up

And that, in substance, was what Charlton's Action-Hero Era was all about. Five titles that were added, one by one, to form one of the most important second-string super-hero lines of the mid-sixties. They flourished for from two to three years and then were dropped without a word of warning in late 1967. (In fact, advertisements for BLUE BEETLE #6 made fans all over the country scurry all over the place in a vain attempt to pick up #5. People with no news-source didn't know that they hadn't missed it until #5 came out the following fall.)

The main reason, of course, was the end of the great super-hero fad. BATMAN's popularity had run its course, and with it, so had that of all super-heroes riding in his wake. Almost by mutual consent, Tower, Mighty, Harvey, Charlton and their fellows dumped the super-heroes like bad pennies. They had made their money from the craze while it lasted, but 1968 was dawning. It was time to get back to business.

It is important to understand Charlton's super-hero stint in context. The Action-Heroes had never been the staple of the Charlton line. In fact, they never even made money! The 1966 revolution affected ALL of Charlton's books in whatever category. During this time the Connecticut company launched GHOSTLY TALES and THE MANY GHOSTS OF DR. GRAVES. Also on the stands were the satiric, teen-oriented GO-GO, several war, Western and romance titles, and the best science-fiction books in many a moon (CHILDREN OF DOOM, SPACE ADVENTURES and STRANGE SUSPENSE STORIES). The superb HERCULES and THANE OF BAGARTH debuted in this period, as possible forerunners of the sword and sorcery genre of comics. (An interesting aside: in the lettercol of HERCULES #3, Dick Giordano commented, "We'd love to do CONAN, but copyright problems aside, (we) couldn't be faithful to the original and get by the Comics Code Authority." THIS is 1968...) Each of these could and should receive further treatment elsewhere; unfortunately, such is not possible within the scope of this article. [Other notable non-super-hero strips included the often hilarious science-fiction western strip WANDER in the back-up slot of CHEYENNE KID by Denny O'Neil and Jim Aparo; and Willi Franz and Sam Glanzman's ultra-realistic, horrifyingly touching LONELY WAR OF PVT. WILLY SHULTZ in FIGHTIN' ARMY, a strip which, in contrast, made such pro-war strips as SHOTGUN HARKER AND THE CHICKEN seem positively obscene. MT]

Sal Gentile, Giordano's successor, explained Charlton's position in this manner:

> Next time you're in a store selling comics, watch what sells most consistently. Not the Long Underwear Laddies. It's Romance, Love, and Marriage that keep the cash register ringing. Western [sic] sell consistently year in and year out. And the War books always have a market. The Super heroes were big for awhile, but they're simmering down, going, going, gone to Valhalla. Where, we may add, we wish them well!

DC and Marvel were undoubtedly glad to see the Action-Heroes fold their tent and thereby lessen the competition. National helped the trend along by hiring away Dick Giordano as an editor, who took with him Denny O'Neil, who soon became DC's premier super-hero writer, Jim Aparo and Steve Skeates, who produced a vastly-improved AQUAMAN, and of course, Steve Ditko, who turned out THE CREEPER and THE HAWK AND THE DOVE. (After both features folded, Ditko returned to Charlton, working sporadically for DC until 1977.)

Years later, in the mid-seventies, Charlton made another stab at the super-hero market. E-MAN, by Joe Staton, was a well-done and well-received Plastic Man-derivative; and YANG, another variation of the kung-fu theme, was nominally super-hero oriented. Both books flourished briefly, in a parallel mid-seveties parallel to the Action-Hero Era. Other action/adventure titles produced during this period included MONSTER HUNTERS (by the still-learning John Byrne) and VENGEANCE SQUAD (by Thunderbolt's old friend, PAM).

The Action-Heroes have made a recent comeback of sorts with the advent of a new form of comics merchandizing: three for a buck in plastic bags on department store racks. Titles such as BLUE BEETLE, CAPTAIN ATOM and JUDOMASTER have been reprinted for the kiddie trade under the trademark of "Modern Comics." (Charlton itself handled the printing.) So, in one form or another, the mid-sixties heroes are still readily accessible to today's audience.

The Charlton crew were an important (perhaps the MOST important) part of the super-hero scene from late '65 to early '68. Their five titles were probably the most instrumental in luring fandom to consideration of the company; fans read BLUE BEETLE and stayed for DR. GRAVES. It gave a new group of writers and artists a foothold in comics, and indirectly changed the face of DC quite a bit in the late sixties. Charlton's impact was not revolutionary, but it was estimable. Four-color history would have indeed been different if the Action-Heroes had not hit the stands.

They were back-seaters, all five of 'em.

And they weren't half bad.

NEXT: THE HARVEY HEROES

Charlton News

Charlton once again becomes the sole company to publish comics specifically aimed at the feminine market when they once again cancel their long-running mystery title, THE MANY GHOSTS OF DR. GRAVES. With #72, dated May, Dr. Graves goes back into limbo to be replaced by another reprint book: SOAP OPERA ROMANCES, which features reprints of the NURSE BETSY CRANE series of the early sixties. (The title was originally planned to appear back in 1977.)

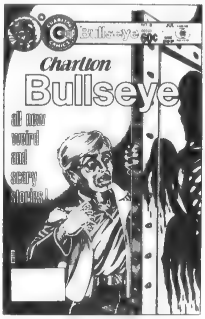
Coming Comics

CHARLTON BULLSEYE No. 7, May. [2/11]

THE MANY GHOSTS OF DR. GRAVES No. 72, May. Last issue. [2/11]

BILLY THE KID No. 148, June. [2/18]

WAR No. 33, June. [2/18]

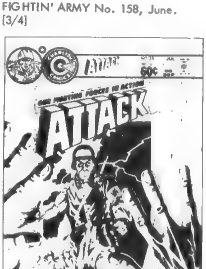


THE FIGHTIN' 5 No. 46, June. Reprinted is "Image of Glory" by Joe Gill, Bill Montes and Ernie Bache from issue #32. Dick Giordano did the cover. [2/25]

GHOSTLY TALES No. 155, June. [2/25]

BATTLEFIELD ACTION No. 75, June. [3/4]

FIGHTIN' ARMY No. 158, June. [3/4]



GHOST MANOR No. 63, June. [3/11]

GUNFIGHTERS No. 73, June. [3/11]

FIGHTIN' MARINES No. 163, June. [3/18]

HAUNTED No. 62, June. [3/18]

ATTACK No. 35, July. Chuck Toole did the cover. [3/25]

SCARY TALES No. 33, June. Mitch O'Connell did the cover. [3/25]

CHARLTON BULLSEYE No. 8, July. Another collection of mystery stories. Mark Heike and Bill Anderson did the cover. [4/1]

SOAP OPERA ROMANCES No. 1, July. Beginning a new series of reprints from NURSE BETSY CRANE, an early sixties romance book. [4/1]

Media Review

About this time of year, as the fall-season programs have all been seen at least a few times (including the long-delayed programs that didn't show up until December), most TV critics set forth into their annual wail about how much worse this season is than any previous season, and how the only good programs around are the old reliables. Needless to say, I certainly won't do that, but now that this column is only a semi-regular review column rather than a news one, I will be a little more extensive than in previous years in saying what I do like.

I think the number of good programs on the air at the present time is about as many as there usually are, and I have the feeling that this is a good thing. In these days of videorecording and cable channel-overkill, there is already the probability that many people are innundated by watchable material. Just imagine what it'd be like if each night's schedule had three hours' worth (not to mention NINE) of good programming; there'd be no time for any other activity except TV for anybody who also has to work or go to school. I think I'd be far more frustrated about TV if there was too much to watch than if there was less than there is now.

Which do I consider truly worth watching? There ARE the old standbys: LOU GRANT, which has finally settled at the perfect balance between issues and exploring the characters we care about; M*A*S*H, surprisingly, which --despite everything I've criticized it for over the past two years (absolute dearth of humor; abandonment of most of previous characterization and continuity; and Alan Alda's extremely fatigued appearance)--still manages to make things pay off when they're being dramatic (Alda's recent "ghost story" being a perfect example); HILL STREET BLUES, which just seems to get better with each episode; GREATEST AMERICAN HERO, which sometimes flags (generally when the class-members are the episodes' focus rather than Ralph Hinckley or Bill Maxwell) but remains the best modern-day super-hero program since SUPERMAN; MORK AND MINDY, whose energy-level and laugh-quotient have risen markedly since Jonathan Winters' arrival; BOSOM BUDDIES, simply the fastest-paced comedy on the air, with Tom Hanks and Peter Scolari in danger of reviving the long-lost art of comedy teams; and WKRP IN CINCINNATI, which is the most overlooked program on the air, besides being the best comedy--giving MTM's other two shows, LOU GRANT and HILL STREET, a run for the money as best show overall. WKRP's variance in plots, approaches, focal points and the near-perfection of its ensemble make me forget entirely why I ever thought the presence of Gary Sandy made it weak.

The other programs I watch regularly which are new include: BRET MAVERICK, which has altered the format, theme song and cast of the original and still kept enough of the old MAVERICK to be entirely pleasing. Obviously, James Garner's being physically unable to carry the show by himself (as he had to do on ROCKFORD FILES) called for the nailing Bret down to a home base (pulling the cast around from town to town as if they'd been connected by an invisible umbilical cord didn't work too well on YOUNG MAVERICK), but Bret is still Bret, and that's what matters. Ed Bruce is surprisingly good in the co-starring role, and I like Darleen Carr just as much. Happily, Stuart Margolin's comic-relief

character, Philo Sandeen, is only a semi-regular, as he's best taken in small doses--but here's crossing my fingers that Jack Kelly makes an appearance before the season ends.

BEST OF THE WEST is the only other western on the air, and it too is satirical, though far more broadly. I find this to be far more satisfying than the producers' other ABC show (TAXI), and funnier as well. Joel Higgins (as Sam Best) and Leonard Frey (Parker Tillman) are a joy to watch, and who can name a weirder person than Tracey Walter as Frog?

Well, possibly Terry, of OPEN ALL NIGHT, played by Sam Whipple. The surreal quality and unique mannerisms he brings to that show make it worth watching, as does the participation of Bubba Smith (one of the few black characters in network sitcomland who does NOT speak in exaggerated dialect). George Dzundza has yet to show me very much in the lead, and I can't stand Susan Tyrell a great deal of the time (a sad bit of miscasting), but the writing and producing (by my former favorites from BOB NEWHART, Tom Patchett and Jay Tarses) make it a dependable source of entertainment. Besides which, it is the only show on the air which prominently features a rackful of comic books in almost every shot of the grocery store to which the title refers. (And you can read the titles, too! The 364-chain must have an "in" with the Capital Distribution Company, as Charlton is occupying a handsome share of the rack, along with Archie, DC, Marvel and a couple of titles I don't recognize (!) They even moved the rack to the front of the store from the back after the first few weeks; perhaps the show should be honored somehow by the Comics Magazine Association of America for setting a good example.)

The last good show I make sure I see is DARKROOM. Unfortunately for it, it's opposite DALLAS, and hence in precarious position for continuance, much less renewal for next season. In any case, it'd be worth your while to seek it out; if you are expecting standard horror/gore, you'll be pleasantly surprised--this show owes far more to TWILIGHT ZONE than THRILLER. Though there are more than one episode per show, it is not as disjointed as NIGHT GALLERY, and usually has one or two very short episodes and one longer than a half an hour. (It's almost as if ABC required a multi-episode format--hey! it works on LOVE BOAT and FANTASY ISLAND! --and the producers are fulfilling the letter of the law only.) Robert Bloch has contributed some episodes, as have other worthies whose names I don't recognize, but it's done in such taste and sincerity that nearly all of the episodes work, even when the premise is weak. Best of all, James Coburn does a good job as host--more in the Alfred Hitchcock vein than Rod Serling, offering sardonic commentary in his patented style.

There are others I watch regularly or semi-regularly, but don't kick myself if I miss: TRAPPER JOHN, TAXI (the near total absence of any denouement in the episodes is VERY frustrating, although the absence of Jeff Conaway this season is a definite plus for the show, and Latka's multiple personalities are at least more interesting than his singular one), LAVERNE AND SHIRLEY (the writing's been mushy for a long time), and three of the five serials, DALLAS, KNOT'S LANDING and FLAMINGO ROAD (the latter because it is so very bad it is entertaining). And the latest version of WALT DISNEY is intermittantly worthwhile; the cartoons, of course, and the new episodes meant to be pilots for new series. But I could have swom that one of the things CBS claimed when they picked up the show was that they would no longer be doing the two-part broadcasting of the Disney live-action theatrical films--most of which are so awful they caused the program's demise on NBC. (Are those things filmed in the flightpath of some L.A. airport? I've never seen so much full-scale post-synch sound in any other studio's films.)

The "new" HOUSE CALLS which recently began (with Lynn Redgrave replaced by Sharon Gless) is at least more lively than it was, and on the few episodes of the new season shown (the previous eight being leftovers from the previous season) the writing is sharper. Still not a great show, but not really painful to watch. And of course, when I'm in the mood for an hour or two of unabashed sentimentality in well-crafted form, LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE and the new FATHER MURPHY fill the bill nicely. I could've done without packing orphans into the Wilder family like cordwood, and geez, when is Michael Landon going to turn over the record when it comes to bedwetting (FATHER MURPHY being the latest of his charges to fulfill his apparent need to rid himself of his own childhood demon). In any case, I don't mind the manipulation inherent in either.

Of new shows which rate "okay," two have been taken off for a while already. MAGGIE is a rather turgid sitcom which could be good with a little more work on the format (notably getting rid of everybody except the family and starting from there), made notable by some of Erma Bombeck's better dialogue and some surprises (subtitles on screen when a bureaucrat is speaking). The other okay show is SHANNON, and that only because of Kevin Dobson. Unfortunately, Dobson was far better suited to play Mike Hammer (which he did in a very well-done TV-movie this season) than another Kojak-clone. The only full episode I saw was pretty sick (involving a sadistic rapist). Maybe CBS will have enough sense to keep Dobson and eject the show.

The other "okay" new show is LOVE, SIDNEY, which is inoffensive. It's certainly not sparklingly written, and Tony Randall was better on his own show. But it is the best sitcom on NBC, though that isn't saying much.

I wish I could say Peter Cook's series, THE TWO OF US, was worth watching. It isn't. I happen to believe Cook is a master comedian, and seeing him wasting his time and talent here is nearly unbearable. The cast isn't the problem here; it's the writing (or lack thereof) and production, supervised by Charlie Hauck, who was responsible for MAUDE (which I shudder when I think I actually watched at one time). Truly sad.

Also sad is MAKING A LIVING, the revamped version of IT'S A LIVING, which lacks a main character with Susan Sullivan's departure. What's sad is that this is as good as it gets for the company that produced SOAP, a truly funny show. This is cancelled, in any case.

I've seen one episode each of STRIKE FORCE, McCLAIN'S LAW and TODAY'S F.B.I. Three hours down the drain.

What do I find totally unwatchable? Other than the obvious (shows I've slammed before) LOVE BOAT, FANTASY ISLAND, DUKES OF HAZZARD, CHiPs, JEFFERSONS, ALICE, ONE DAY AT A TIME, DIFF'RENT STROKES, THREE'S COMPANY, REAL PEOPLE and THAT'S INCREDIBLE, I also have no affection for ARCHIE BUNKER, BARNEY MILLER, NURSE, CODE RED and TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT. The latter wastes Ted Knight as a "cartoonist," whose resemblance to any cartoonist living or dead is purely nonexistent. Add to that PVT. BENJAMIN, a bad sitcom adaptation of a bad alleged "comedy" theatrical film (breaking something of a streak; ODD COUPLE, M*A*S*H and HOUSE CALLS were all better than their theatrical counterparts, though HOUSE CALLS--bland as it is--wins almost by default), which almost makes me recall GOMER PYLE (ugh) with affection; and MR. MERLIN, a purported attempt to bring children-oriented situation comedy back to TV. While the purpose is admirable, this is both dull and dumb, not even having the advantages of BEWITCHED or I DREAM OF JEANNIE (shows which were dumb but at least had appealing stars). Clark Brandon is wooden as Zac, and Barnard Hughes is unchallenged by the role of Merlin.

I hold no affection at all for 60 MINUTES, either; I suppose you can chalk this up to the same reasons why

this magazine isn't oriented toward the confrontation school of news writing. Mike, Marley, Harry, Ed and Dan have this smug, "What fools these mortals be" attitude toward everything and everybody I can't stomach. Another show I make sure to miss regularly is the syndicated ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT, a show which has the shortest attention span of any on the air--if any story gets more than a minute of their time it's certain to be a surface-oriented interview with every empty-headed celebrity foolish enough to grant them their time. The icing on the cake has to be Ron Hendren, who as chief "reader" of the miniscule news bits manages to be both insincere and unctuous, despite the fact that he says little that could be construed as his opinion. Needless to say, very little actual news of upcoming film or TV projects is ever given, and their little "quizes" at the end of segments are frequently erroneous. Skip it.

I have plenty to watch without those "unwatchable"s, however, and I'm anxiously awaiting the new DAVID LETTERMAN SHOW (being an inveterate fan of his old morning show) as well as POLICE SQUAD, the show from Zucker, Abrahams and Zucker (of AIRPLANE fame). So I don't sit around moaning about how bad TV is getting...very much. Besides--I know by looking at the ratings that my opinions are in the minority, and I'm lucky to be getting what I'm getting. - Rona Blabbit

Review

WATCHING TV
By Harry Castleman and Walter J. Podrazik

I'm in a kind of an odd position here, not only in that one of the authors is a personal friend of mine, but because I did production work on this book (assembling the paste-ups for the prime-time schedules used in the book). While I cannot, of course, claim to be objective, I can say this: It's very worthwhile, well-written and highly informative. Here's why.

The many encyclopediae covering television which have popped up over the past five years have been quite useful in helping me recall names, series premises, and lifespan of said series. That none of the three (COMPLETE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF TV PROGRAMS, THE COMPLETE DIRECTORY TO PRIME TIME NETWORK TV SHOWS and TOTAL TV) can be totally relied upon or provide everything the others do, is annoying--but not as much as the fact that none of these can be read as books. Naturally, you could begin at page one and read the alphabetical listings of each, but it won't tell you very much about the overall picture of TV and its evolution to current state. WATCHING TV does.

The amount of research and reading it took to compile this book is staggering to imagine; obscure occurances had to be dug out to build the larger picture of the beginnings of TV. Surely, none of the major papers or even the trade magazines recognized what the historical significance of many minor Federal Communications Commission rulings would be at the time, and Harry and Wally have managed to unearth them all to paint a very unflattering picture of governmental foot-dragging and plain, astounding F.C.C. stupidity. I never realized the exact means used to build the TV networks, why there was a five-year freeze in new TV station licensing in the early '50s, why and how color broadcasting and UHF growth took so very long when the technology existed so long, exactly how the quiz show scandals occurred, and many other overall trends -- all of which couldn't find a place in any of the encyclopediae simply by definition.

But even with all this info this book isn't a dry recitation of technological advances and the exultation of live-drama anthologies, news programming sports and public television that one usually has to wade through when reading this kind of historical contextual information. Harry and Wally tell the story from a different vantage point: that of the average viewer.

Perhaps it's because they're both about the same age as me, but in a remarkable number of cases, they have a stated admiration for many of the same programs (series, that is; imagine a TV book which believes series to be worthwhile!) I loved while growing up. Make no mistake; being a historical analysis, WATCHING TV is not written objectively, and nearly every mention of a particular series features the authors' critique. In all honesty, this put me off for awhile. When I first got the book, I began reading it as I do with every non-fiction book I own: somewhere in the middle, looking for hooks to latch on to. As I had first become fully cognizant of TV in the late '50s, I began there, reading through to the early '70s. In a few cases where we didn't agree on the value of a particular series, I began to bristle. How dare they not like what I like, hate what I hate? I put it down, and after a period of time, picked it up and read it from the beginning.

I've never met anyone whose tastes in anything were totally the same as mine, and I realized that I was expecting far too much of anyone to think that they'd be "right" all of the time. With that in mind, it was far easier to deal with, and it also became clear that this book had to take stands in order to work. Okay, so maybe we only agree 75% of the time; for every peculiar favorite I might have, they had another which I didn't like, and it balanced out. Here, at last, was a book which didn't condemn 95% of series television to the purgatory of being beneath the author's contempt.

Flaws? Very few really obvious ones, surprisingly for a book of this length (trade paperback size and 308 pages). I discovered by reading from the middle that the chapters are structured so that little knowledge of what had gone before was essential to understand the occurances in a particular year since the facts were repeated if needed. If read straight through (and it took me ten hours to do so), this is a trifle annoying. Also, sometimes programs are not covered in the year they debuted (BOB NEWHART SHOW, for example, doesn't show up until its final season on the air), and this can be disconcerting. (In that particular case, I was more than a little teed-off, believing -- mistakenly -- that the authors' didn't share my belief in the value of the program, while giving space to another show--MAUDE--I find nearly devoid of any value at this late date.) Another annoyance was a rather overdone usage of a couple of shows they thought really bad (THE FLINTSTONES and GILLIGAN'S ISLAND) as examples cited more than a few times, made doubly annoying because I enjoyed them. But these are certainly minor nitpickings, especially when considering the sheer amount of information contained in the book and how truly entertaining it is to read.

When Wally sent me the book to review, he pointed out that we gave a lot of space to the corrections of errata in the ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ANIMATED CARTOON SERIES, and that he'd be expecting a full seven pages of corrections under an equal-space understanding. Sorry to disappoint you, Wally. Other than the caption you pointed out to me (a photo of Adam West as Batman and Burt Ward as Robin which misidentifies Maurice Evans/The Puzzler as David Wayne/The Mad Hatter), the only true error I found was the identification of defense attorney Petrocelli as a private eye, and some minor niggling about how I'd interpret Jane Hathaway's character on THE BEVERLY HILLBILLIES. What may be disappointing to Wally, though, is a bonus for readers when they read the book; it's very reliable.

So, if you can take the word of someone who can't possibly be objective and who has some vested interest, believe me when I say that WATCHING TV is every bit as entertaining as (dare I say it?) watching TV.

Hey Harry and Wally: can you use any of this on the jacket blurb?

- Mike Tiefenbacher

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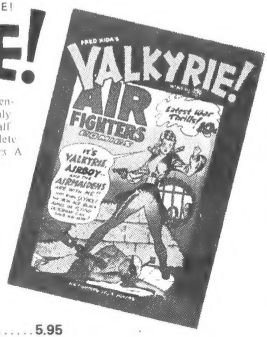

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